

OFFICERS ON PATROL: A QUALITATIVE EXAMINATION OF PATROL OFFICER  
BEHAVIOR AND DECISION MAKING

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**Title**

Officers On Patrol: A Qualitative Examination of Patrol Officer Behavior  
and Decision Making

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The Supervisory Committee certifies that this *disquisition* complies with North Dakota  
State University's regulations and meets the accepted standards for the degree of

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The understanding of what patrol officers do, and why, suffers from a lack of perspective presented from the officers themselves. To develop this understanding, a qualitative methodology was employed in the current study which entailed ride-alongs and semi-structured interviews with 59 patrol officers of the Fargo, ND police department. Research inquires focused on how officers viewed patrol work, how they conducted it, and how they viewed, and utilized different forms of intelligence that might assist them in their patrol duties. In the context of patrol work, officers discussed the purposes of patrol and how they serve them, their personal goals, and feelings, obstacles, beat coverage, dispatch, prioritization of duties, techniques, patrol focuses and departmental expectations. Officers also discussed the utility and value of departmental and officer derived intelligence and the nature and quality of communication between both officers and the department. Results revealed the importance officers place on the act of patrolling, the patrol obstacles generated through short staffing, high call volume, and what officers referred to as nuisance calls. Also revealed was a set of officers' informal working rules that constituted a beat management philosophy known as beat integrity. Results also uncovered the importance that officers place on communication with both the public and the department, the problem natured focus of their patrol activities, their self-reliance on officer generated intelligence, and the negative views they held regarding the quality of departmental intelligence. Results suggest how this deeper understanding of officer behavior and decision-making can improve officer development, officer satisfaction by addressing their focuses and concerns, and the dissemination and quality of intelligence.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Admin .....	Refers to the police department administration.
BOP .....	Beat Ops Plan
CI .....	Confidential Informant
COP .....	Referencing the concept of Community Oriented Policing it refers to officer activities involving patrolling in and/or making contact with citizens in public spaces
CSI .....	Crime Scene Investigation
CSO .....	Community Service Officer
ILP .....	Intelligence Led Policing
Intel .....	Intelligence

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## INTRODUCTION

Patrol has been an integral part of law enforcement since the inception of formal policing. The purposes of patrol include answering calls in a timely manner, deterring and apprehending criminals, ensuring order, and alleviating fear of crime (Mitchell, 1972; Jobson and Schneck, 1982). For officers to accomplish these goals, they must do so within the context of the organizational mandates of effectiveness and efficiency (Skogan, 1976). Two major factors that could affect officers' ability within that context are their available time for patrol and the information or intelligence that guides their patrol decisions.

Police departments have demonstrated continual efforts to maintain effectiveness and efficiency, first with the recognition that the automobile is a valuable tool for patrol (Mandel, 1924) and later with attempts to design beats and patrol routes for optimal coverage and effectiveness (Rosenshine, 1970). Departments continued to refine their approach by utilizing algorithms for patrol design (Ruan, Meirina, Yu, Pattipati and Popp, 2005) and improving resource allocation (Caron and Curtin, 1984), while criminologists explored how different patrol methodologies like hotspot policing (Sherman and Weisburd, 1995) and saturation patrol (Schnelle, Kirchner, Casey, Uselton and McNees, 1977) affect crime.

Despite improvements made in the areas of effectiveness and efficiency, the time available for officers to patrol could serve as a major limitation to patrol activities (Whitaker, 1981). The amount of unassigned time varies widely by jurisdiction and is related to the number of calls, beat size, and manpower (Buren and Stenzel, 1984). While calls for service account for a quarter to three quarters of an officer's shift, the remaining unassigned time must be spread between lunch and breaks, paperwork, and other administrative duties, leaving only a small

portion of shifts for engaging in patrol (Cordner, 1979; Whitaker, 1981; Famega, 2003; Mastrofski, 2004; Famega, 2005).

With a small portion of unassigned shift time devoted to patrol, officers may be more effective by utilizing intelligence that can direct their patrol activities (Skogan and Atunes, 1979). Some departments utilize geographical information systems to plot district and beats with crime incidents (Johnson, 2000), while other departments utilize management and information programs like Compstat (Weisburd, Mastrofski, McNally, and Greenspan, 2002) to disseminate this intelligence. Research indicates that this intelligence may be perceived as having little use. The intelligence is frequently assessed as having little operational value (Dabney, 2010), the source of the intelligence is devalued (Collier, 2006), and officers rely more on informal work rules and their own experience in managing their patrol time (Ricksheim and Chermak, 1993; Paulson, 2004; Cope, 2004; Stroshine, Alpert, and Dunham, 2008; Worrall, 2013).

In considering how officers patrol, research in the field has utilized studies examining the kinds of patrol duties officers engage in, how much time officers spend on different patrol duties, how citizen react to patrol, and measures of effectiveness while on patrol including arrests, stops and citations. Despite this, there is an information gap about what exactly officers are doing on patrol, and why, because the officers' perspective on patrol is missing in the literature. By inquiring with officers, we gain a better understanding of the value they put on patrol and the methodologies used to ensure effectiveness and efficiency in patrol. Additionally, officers' perspectives can indicate how they determine where to patrol and the value of various kinds of intelligence that might guide their patrol behavior (Wain and Ariel, 2014). Research findings, like Collier (2006) indicate officers may devalue some intelligence and by examining the officers' perspective on different, specific types of intelligence we gain more insight into how

officers view intelligence sources, the intelligence they produce, and the influence they have on patrol. Officers' views can serve as an important source of information. By listening to and understanding the rank and file's perspective, departments can draw on their experience and knowledge in determining how to best accomplish the goals of police work (Bayley and Bittner, 1981).

The current study poses two questions to address these gaps in the research; how do patrol officers manage their area of responsibility and how do officers utilize intelligence in their patrolling activities. I used a qualitative approach that relied on a combination of open and closed ended interview questions and participant observation conducted during ride-alongs with officers in the Fargo Police Department where their interactions with the public, other officers, and their behavior and decision making during patrol and calls for service were observed.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

To provide some background on how officers manage their area of responsibility and how they utilize intelligence, the current study examines three related domains of policing: (1) the definition of effectiveness and efficiency as it relates to policing, (2) the time available for officers to patrol, often referred to as unassigned time, and (3) the type and perceived value of intelligence that guides officers' behaviors. The department administration may view effective and efficient patrol activities differently than officers as well as this view varying among officers themselves as their own experiences may suggest to them what is effective and efficient. These differing views may affect the focuses that the department and officers have on patrol activities and areas of their beat. Available time, the unassigned time in which they are not answering calls for service, that officers have to patrol could be affected by call volume, staffing as well as the beat and shift on officer works. These factors could induce a wide variation in available patrol time resulting in differences in the way officers utilize their unassigned time and overcome obstacles that intrude on or take away from available patrol time. The intelligence, defined as information that guides, directs or suggests officer activities, that officers use typically stems from two sources, the department and the officers themselves. The department can use technology to map crime and produce statistics that officers can utilize. Officers themselves will also be able to generate intelligence through their activities and experience on the beat as well as utilizing other officers' knowledge as intelligence. How officers perceive the different kinds of intelligence may affect the way officers use that intelligence or the value they give it.

### **Effectiveness and Efficiency**

Organizational theory suggests that for police departments, resource expenditures are balanced between the competing factors of where they yield the most benefits and where the

needs are greatest (Skogan, 1976). It is expected that police departments will utilize their resources in a way that will be effective and efficient in achieving their organizational goals. Those goals include reducing and preventing crime and identifying, locating, and apprehending criminals.

Two concepts that can be used to gauge the activities of organizations are effectiveness and efficiency (Skogan, 1976). Skogan considered effectiveness as converting a large part of task performance into desired outcomes. Efficiency is defined as a processing cost; turning input into output with as little organization effort as possible. Skogan measured effectiveness as the comparison of arrests to reported crime and efficiency as the reduction in costs in maintaining effectiveness.

Jobson and Schneck (1982) stated that though effectiveness is the most basic and strongest characteristic defining organizations, the concept of effectiveness is theoretically and empirically underdeveloped. Because of the numerous ways effectiveness has been defined and measured, and their observation that it is often the organization's participants gauging their own effectiveness rather than outside groups, the "cumulative knowledge [of effectiveness] is limited and systematic development is lacking" (Jobson and Schneck, 1982, p. 26).

Theoretically these views of effectiveness and efficiency tie into the utilization of patrol. As an integral part of policing, and the largest portion of police department staff, patrol is largely responsible for achieving effectiveness in policing. Views of effectiveness in patrolling vary. The essence of patrol, Mitchell (1972) states, is availability in answering calls and deterring crime. Jobson and Schneck (1982) suggest that crime prevention is an internal measure of police effectiveness while for the public, effectiveness is a perception of reduced crime stemming from officer visibility and speed of response to calls for service. These indicators of effectiveness;



visibility, availability, response time, deterrence, and crime prevention. Attempts can be made to meet these goals by having officers actively moving about their area of control as it is assumed that officers will not only deter criminal activity but may more quickly respond to reports of crime. The utility of patrol was even more enhanced with the advent of the use of the automobile in police work.

### **Considerations of Motorized Patrol**

The automobile was a policing innovation that brought with it the potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of police officers. Mandel (1924) saw the introduction of this innovation as providing the ability for officers to carry essential equipment like first aid kits and additional weapons as well as a way to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of short-staffed departments. Motorized patrol still allowed officers to investigate as they had on foot while allowing them sufficient time to monitor the rest of their beat. It was the belief that the speed with which officers could now cover their beat would act as a deterrent to criminals.

The effectiveness of motorized patrol did not seem to be in question early in its history. In developing his scale of police officer effectiveness, Parratt (1938) did not consider how police officers patrolled, but instead focused on specific duties. These included their proficiency at developing informants, the follow-up of telephone reports of crime, conducting quick and thorough investigations, apprehending criminals in difficult cases, and enforcing laws that were more strongly supported by public opinion. As motorized patrol became the primary method of patrol this, and other technological innovations related to policing, raised the service expectations of the public in regard to response time and the ability to deter criminals through visibility on their beats (Mitchell, 1972).

The necessity of selective distribution of resources was well recognized throughout policing in the 1920's and 1930's, with Walton (1958) concluding as early as 1950 that factors like the number of officers and jurisdiction street miles will influence the distribution of resources. The geographic areas that officers patrol and how they are patrolled is a consideration in officer efficiency and effectiveness. Historically the boundaries of jurisdiction and precincts were hand drawn, and in many jurisdictions still are (Curtin, Hayslett-McCall and Qiu, 2010). These informal procedures do not allow for the development of optimal resource allocation or patrol routes.

### **Developing the Efficient and Effective Use of Patrol**

Within the context of workload and beat size, a number of approaches have been explored toward addressing the mandates of efficient and effective patrol. Rosenshine (1970) suggests that for patrolling to be effective it should be sufficient to be noticed by citizens to reduce their fear of crime, but yet be random enough that potential offenders cannot predict an officer's appearance. This randomness that Rosenshine described is defined as where an observer will not be able to predict when a patrol car will pass any point on the beat regardless of whether they knew the arrival time of any previous appearance at this spot. Mitchell (1972) notes the importance of designing patrol routes to generate the lowest mean response times and travel distances while maintaining equal workloads for officers. By minimizing the travel distance, high crime areas are automatically patrolled more frequently suggesting that high incident districts should have geographically smaller beats. In this way, Mitchell concludes, the "two primary functions of patrol, answering calls for service and deterrence, are simultaneously satisfied" (p. 584).

Recognizing the need for improvement, Rosenshine (1970) demonstrated how analytical models could be used to determine patrol routes with the greatest degree of randomness. Continued development of patrol routing led to algorithms that could best utilize resources by examining incident rates at the precinct level and determine the most efficient patrol routes (Ruan, Meirina, Yu, Pattipati, and Popp, 2005). Ruan et al. (2005) proposed that within precincts, beats are produced and patrol officers can randomly select one of a number of predetermined optimal patrol routes. The officer patrols the beat until receiving and taking a call for service. When finished with the call, the officer resumes patrol in the last spot before the call. To increase efficiency and effectiveness, and to account for officers wanting “action” on their beat, the algorithm generates the highest reward routes to ensure that officer bias in route selection will not result in insufficient coverage within the beat.

As efficiency and effectiveness are affected by the level of personnel and financial resources for patrol, departments have considered ways to manage limited patrol resources in a variety of scenarios. Consequently, a variety of methodologies have been considered and utilized in managing resources while still achieving effectiveness and efficiency. For example, Kansas City dealt with fiscal shortages during a period of high demand for services with its Strategic and Target Orientated Patrol (STOP) plan (Caron and Curtin, 1984). Shifts were lengthened and precincts were reconfigured so that beats could be designed with equal workloads and officer deployment needs were calculated monthly. Birge and Pollock (1989) noted the difficulties in managing resources in rural areas where long distances decrease the likelihood of efficient coverage. They examined Strategies for Wide Area Patrol (SWAP) modeling that uses geographical and patrol features and “states of patrol” to manage dispatch and patrol officer density. Curtin et al. (2010) also demonstrated that the Police Patrol Area Covering (PPAC)

model can more efficiently utilize patrol officer deployment by reconfiguring beats to reduce the distance between beats with adjacent high crime areas. Patrol force size and the speed of backup can then both be managed more efficiently.

As departments have made efforts toward the efficient use of resources in patrol, scrutiny has also been placed on the effectiveness of motorized patrol. Kelling, Pate, Dieckman, and Brown (1974) examined the effects of different kinds of police patrol utilizing a randomized control trial to determine if any differences in outcomes occurred between reactive beats (where no preventive patrol was conducted), control beats (where the number of patrols remained constant), and proactive beats (where the number of patrols on the beat were increased). Utilizing both victimization surveys and police records as the measures of effectiveness, the results revealed some important information about preventative patrol. No between-beat differences were found in the victimization surveys for offenses like robbery, burglary and other offenses typically thought to be deterred by police visibility. Official records showed only a few differences across experimental conditions and no consistent pattern associated with any changes. Citizen satisfaction with the police, the attitude of business people toward crime and the police, the use of protective measures, traffic accidents or injuries, and police response time or citizens' satisfaction with it, did not significantly vary based on patrol conditions

Similarly, Schnelle, Kirchner, Casey, Uselton, and McNees (1977) explored the use of saturation patrol in Nashville, TN. They found significant reductions in reports of Part One offenses only during the night shift and that the deterrent effects faded within a few days after the intervention ceased.

### **Available Patrol Time**

As previously mentioned, officer workload was a factor in designing beats but it is also a consideration when examining officer staffing on the beat and the time available for officers to patrol. The proportion of workload, typically based on the number of calls per shift or total time required for all calls per shift per day of the week, often determines officer allocation (Buren and Stenzel, 1984). Walton (1958) concluded that the number of Part One Index crimes and minutes consumed with radio calls affects officer workload and thus their available time for patrol.

In 1981, Whitaker concluded that there had been little systematic analysis done on how officers spend their time. In the literature regarding workload, unassigned time or downtime referred to the time officers do not spend responding to calls. It is within this time that officers complete paperwork, take breaks, provide backup to other officers and engage in other self-initiated or self-directed activities that include traffic stops and patrol, though the types of activities and time devoted to them can vary widely (Whitaker, 1981).

A 1970 study by Webster found that 21% of officers' logged events (including traffic stops) stemmed from self-initiated activity but that self-initiated activity only involved about 9% of their shift time. Webster identified six categories of officer self-initiated activities during patrol: on-view violations, walk stop (stopping and questioning of suspicious persons on foot), car stop (checking on both parked and moving vehicles), security checks, rolling checks (checking vehicle registration against the database of stolen and suspicious vehicles), and warrant checks (stopping vehicles in the hopes of apprehending individuals with outstanding warrants). Webster noted that at his study site, a recent increase in calls for service volume may have resulted in officers having less time to patrol.

In his review of officer workload studies, Corder (1979) concluded that the majority of police work does not consist of crime related tasks and activities. While officers engage in a wide variety of activities, Corder found that only one third of the studies in his review examined the use of what he termed 'free patrol time'. He considered this lack of examination a dangerous omission as this free patrol time accounts for half of officers' shift time. Overall, he found that 55% of officer time was uncommitted with 39% of this time dedicated to patrol. Other research found that this uncommitted time varies between departments and studies. Whitaker (1981) found that 66% of an officer's shift time was unassigned while Frank, Brandl and Watkins (1997) found some insignificant variation in unassigned time between community policing officers (26%) and regular beat officers (33%). Mastrofski (2004) stated that his studies from the late 1990's indicated officers spent 75% of their shift time engaged in self-directed activities which included things like paperwork, providing backup, and taking breaks.

Famega's 2003 study of the Baltimore, MD police revealed findings similar to those noted above and contributed greatly to defining and understanding the activities officers engage in. She found that officers received an average of five calls per shift and that after answering calls, which accounted for 25% of their time, officers were left with an average of 75% unassigned time on their shifts. With this time not engaged in calls, 48% of what they engaged in was self-initiated activities while only 6% of the officers' activities were administrative or supervisor directed. The officers also report that often no specific directive was provided to them as to how or what specifically should be targeted. Problem-focused directed patrolling was used to a lesser degree but it usually stemmed from citizen complaints. When she examined the content of supervisor directives, 84% indicated the places officers should focus on, 40% indicated the time, but only 16% indicated what activities the officers should be engaged in.

Famega notes that overly broad categories of police activities also mask how officers are really spending their time. Examining a wide variety of police activities, Famega found that out of 480 shift minutes, 347 minutes were downtime (72%). Vehicle patrol, providing backup, meals and breaks, and roll calls were all performed exclusively in downtime. While vehicle patrol accounted for 42% of downtime, 30% was taken up in meals, personal business, waiting, administrative work, roll call and prep, and report writing. Another 11% of their time was used in traffic enforcement and 3% in problem focused activity. The rest of their down time (16%) was spent in various other minor tasks, for example, foot patrol, meeting with police personnel for official and non-official business, and serving warrants and subpoenas.

The results of Famega's study show that despite the promise of patrol being utilized as a crime deterrent, only 2 hours and 38 minutes of officers' unassigned time was left for patrolling and only 13 minutes were spent on problem focused activity. Famega detailed other officer activities that might be performed within the context of effective patrol including surveillance, checking on suspicious circumstances, conversing with the public, conduct research/problem inquiry, information gathering, foot patrol, and attempt to locate suspects, witnesses, or informants. The study revealed that, on average, these activities, only accounted for 16 minutes of their shift. Famega helped reinforce research findings that demonstrate officers will have a limited amount of time to patrol and in her case, it appeared that officers used little of that patrol time to engage in any proactive policing aside from traffic enforcement.

How officers utilize unassigned time to engage in patrol is another consideration that may vary by officer beat and shift. Cordner (1979) explored how officers conducted their patrols, providing an indication that officers considered beat features and characteristics such as likely locations of certain types of crime, young people, and known criminals as focuses while

conducting patrol. When patrolling, officers patrolled at a medium speed on main streets in business areas and secondarily at slower speeds on side streets in residential areas. Patrolling on the different shifts varied as well, with more patrolling occurring on day shifts compared to more time answering calls on evening shifts and more personal break time on night shifts. He also found task emphasis on patrol shifted focus according to the time of the shift. Day shifts spent a greater amount of time checking on and enforcing traffic situations, followed by checking residential areas and talking to the public. Evening shifts spent more time checking businesses and residential areas, while the night shift spent more time checking on businesses and suspicious people, followed by infrequent residential checks.

A 1981 study by Whitaker found that 66% of the shift time was unassigned and that on average officers had 5 hours at their discretion and spent 3 hours on patrol. A number of factors affected how officers patrolled. For example, the income level of a neighborhood affected the number of calls for service and thus time available for patrol, as well as the frequency of patrol in the area. The number of business checks during a shift varied widely from one every hour to one every 10 hours of unassigned time while residential security checks and parking concerns were even less of a focus.

In a 1999 study comparing traditional police officers and community policing officers, Parks, Mastrofski, Dejong, and Gray found that traditional police officers in both St. Petersburg, FL, and Indianapolis, IN, departments spent approximately the same amount of shift time in face-to-face encounters with the public, although they did find differences in the time spent on general patrol. Indianapolis officers spent, on average, 127 minutes per 8-hour shift on general patrol compared to the average 87 minutes per 8-hour shift spent on patrol by St. Petersburg officers. The decreased time available for general patrol in St. Petersburg was attributable to a



more time-consuming process of report completion and filing (on average 32 minutes more per officer) than what occurred in Indianapolis. When comparing these traditional officers to community policing officers, they also discovered that community policing specialists spent 20 to 30 minutes less per shift than traditional officers on general patrol, though this was anticipated as the specialists should have emphasized other COP activities over general patrol.

Conducting a review of officer downtime studies, Famega (2005) found that the average amount of downtime for officers was 75%. Earlier dispatch studies reviewed were less informative, due to methodological issues, as to what portion of officer downtime was dedicated to patrol compared to other activities. In observational studies, Famega found that while there was a wide range of time dedicated to patrolling, the average time spent patrolling on the shift was 27%, as well as seeing indications that the amount of patrol time was greater on day shifts.

The size of a department and the jurisdiction they patrol may also provide variance in how officers patrol. Eichenberg's 2011 study of patrol officer workload in a small department found the night shift had slightly more unassigned time (33% of shift time) compared to the day shift (28% shift time) and that 66% of officers' time was involved with calls and various self-initiated activities leaving 20 minutes per hour to engage in preventative patrol. Liederbach (2005) notes that community factors may influence patrol style, finding that some studies report smaller and rural departments were able to establish more face-to-face contacts with citizens and engage in more crime prevention activities like patrolling parks, parking lots, and schools. He also notes that while most studies on patrol either focus on large cities or small or rural communities, there appears to be a gap in the literature examining patrol in suburban areas. He found suburban officers, on average, spent 36% of their time on motorized patrol.

The literature indicates that there is a large variance in officers' patrol time dependent on the department and the shift. Activities on this unassigned patrol time will also vary widely ranging from directed patrol, report writing, traffic enforcement, and patrolling certain areas. While it is expected that will also be the case in the current study, the current study seeks to explore how patrol may also vary by beat and shift, as well as a closer examination of how call volume affects patrol time. The current study also seeks to answer questions not fully explored in the literature. When officers make that decision to engage in self-initiated activities, what are the influential factors that drive their decision to engage in any particular activity? Why do they decide at any given point to run traffic, or fill out reports, or engaged in directed patrol activities? The qualitative approach allows officers to express the thoughts, attitudes, and beliefs that influence their decision making and bring that to light.

### **Sources of Intelligence**

Having access to and utilizing information is essential for effective policing (Skogan and Antunes, 1979). Officers have two main sources of intelligence resources at their disposal to assist and guide them in their patrol decisions, one is departmentally derived, the other stems from human intelligence and experience. Departmental use of computer technology has allowed geospatial mapping of crime incidents which has led to the utilization of this information for "hot spots policing" and other directed patrol measures. Compstat and other similar information gathering and dissemination systems also refine directed patrol efforts with a more comprehensive picture of crime within a beat or district. Officers also utilize direct human intelligence. Officers rely on intelligence developed and relayed to them by other beat and shift officers, from the officers' sources or informants on their beat, and their own experiences on their beat and as a law enforcement officer in general.

## **Geo-spatial Mapping**

If officer patrol is focused on the areas where crime is more prevalent or more likely to occur, more effective utilization of patrol may occur. This information can be generated by examining current and historical crime data in specific geographical areas. Geographic Information Systems (GIS) are computer systems that generate geographical maps incorporating large amounts of location based crime data points (Johnson, 2000). The use of GIS enables departments to access and utilize spatial crime maps that can be used to identify crime hotspots and assist in producing actionable intelligence to guide police behaviors. Ratcliffe (1999) also noted this is a change from the traditional gathering of information from citizens and informants but recognized that it can enhance the effectiveness of police by allowing them to focus on areas of concern. High crime and problems areas are identified, with crime mapping, which allows the administration and beat officers to formulate action plans based on this intelligence and direct their resources toward those areas. This may result in increased patrolling through those areas by officers or specific, directed enforcement meant to address a particular problem.

Not every agency needs or wants a dedicated GIS system (Burnett, 2007). Smaller agencies can still benefit from crime mapping by sharing a regional mapping system that utilizes less expensive, less complex software more suitable for smaller departments. To identify trends, variables for analysis must be entered, however this can be accomplished either by employees sharing this duty across a region or utilizing a Record Management System (RMS) option for the software with the designated variables already entered into the RMS. As GIS systems have become more refined, they offer additional capabilities like the layering of environmental features that could affect incidence of crime. By integrating environmental structural components that might be associated with increased or decreased offending, the police can further narrow

their focus by addressing situational crime prevention with business community members, the public, and stakeholders who can influence the infrastructure capabilities in a city (Burnett, 2007).

### **Hotspot Policing Intelligence**

Once departments have the means of mapping crime data, this data can be utilized to direct officer actions. Hotspot policing is one method of directed patrol that utilizes crime data to position officers in areas of greater criminal activity. Sherman and Weisburd (1995, p. 630) define hotspots as “small clusters of addresses with frequent 'hard' crime call activity, which also had substantial 'soft' crime calls for service”. These spots could be used to identify spatially connected clusters of crime and as Murray, McGuffog, Western and Mullins (2001) note, multi-layer analyses can include spatial data mining and hotspot and hotbed comparisons. Ratcliffe and McCullagh (1999) helped further define hotspots by distinguishing between “hotpoints” as singular locations with repeat victimizations that are small and spatially stable and “hotbeds”, a collection of a high number of crimes occurring at discrete locations adjacent to one another. Short, Bertozzi, and Brantingham (2010) presented an analytical system designed to distinguish between subcritical hotspots, in which suppression efforts will destroy the hotspot, and highly stable, supercritical hotspots that will be displaced by suppression and break up into smaller hotspots in the surrounding area.

Research has demonstrated that hotspot policing, by utilizing intelligence-enhanced patrol, can be effective in meeting organizational goals. Sherman and Weisburd's (1995) experiment demonstrated that a crackdown-back off (an intensified but intermittent pattern) approach produced a significant deterrent effect that reduced total calls for service and hard crime calls for service while also significantly reducing observed disorder. Braga and Bond

(2008) found that more specific and focused police activities were more effective in controlling crime and disorder. Their results showed that a comprehensive problem-oriented policing approach in hotspots resulted in a significant reduction in the total number of calls for service, as well as a 20% reduction in calls for service for most crime types, and a significant reduction (14%) in observed disorder. They also found no evidence of displacement. In 2011, Taylor, Koper and Woods conducted an experiment comparing the effectiveness of problem oriented policing and directed saturation patrol. Both approaches showed a significant increase in self-initiated activities. The saturation approach resulted in a greater number of field stops, but there was no significant difference between the groups in arrests.

Reviews of other experiments and quasi experiments bolster the view of the effectiveness of hotspot policing. Braga (2001) examined the results of five experiments and four quasi-experiments, finding that the majority had significant reductions in crime, which included reductions in calls for service, violent crime, and a variety of subtypes of crime in hotspots. He also observed reductions in social disorder in ten of eleven treatment sites. Avdija (2008) reviewed eight randomized control trials that examined place, offender, and offense target interventions. Avdija demonstrated that six of the eight studies showed a reduction in crime. He noted that targeted policing was more effective when it incorporated crime analysis in identifying hotspots and repeat offenders and defining the intervention strategy.

Refinement in the methods for determining the most effective and efficient patrol approaches for hotspots has been ongoing. In 1978, Chelest presented an algorithm to calculate the allocation of patrol units in hotspots with the greatest likelihood of crime. Koper's (1995) research approach to patrolling hotspots focused on the optimal amount of time officers should spend in hotspots to demonstrate a deterrent effect. Rather than the simple act of driving through

a hotspot, Koper's results suggest officers do a patrol stop in the hotspot that lasts between 11 and 15 minutes in order to reap a longer survival time without disorder in the hotspot. Periods longer than 15 minutes showed a diminished return. Other methodologies (Reis, Melo, Coelho, and Furtado, 2006a; 2006b; Chawathe, 2007; Kuo, Lord, and Walden, 2012) strive to provide optimal patrol routes through a variety of algorithm models, while risk terrain modeling is incorporated into crime and trend mapping. Groff and La Vigne (2002) stated that while retrospective crime mapping may be useful, true usefulness lies in identifying the early signs of criminal activity and utilizing proactive approaches before crime occurs. Crime detection patterns can also be determined through data mining (Nath, 2006) and the more efficient allocation of police resources can be realized with effective crime forecasting. Caplan, Kennedy, and Piza (2012) found that the New Jersey State Police were able to integrate environmental characteristics such as the presence of bars and gang activity into hotspots mapping. By utilizing near repeat analysis (the increased probability of new crimes occurring within a certain distance and within a certain period of time from a prior incident) they were able to calculate the likelihood of repeat violent offenses in proximate hotspots.

### **Compstat and Intelligence Reports as Resources for Officers**

As noted above, GIS systems are a means for generating crime intelligence data which includes the types of crimes, their numbers, and geographical locations. This data is constructed into geographical hotspots. Compstat and similar systems provide a way to turn hotspot data into actionable intelligence which can be disseminated to officers, provide focal areas of patrol, and allow for officer feedback (Weisburd, Mastrofski, McNally, and Greenspan, 2002). A system introduced in 1994, Compstat is one of a variety of similar methods that expands on the traditional officer briefing by providing a hierarchal structure of intelligence dissemination that

utilizes empirically derived data on crime hotspots and trends. In 2002, Weisburd and his colleagues reviewed the current state of Compstat with a national survey of over 500 police departments. They described it as more than just a technical system but a data driven system designed to give precedent to tangible operational objectives over administrative objectives. It has the capability to allow easier managerial oversight of objectives, early identification of intra-organizational problems and the flexibility to solve those problems. The authors did recognize that New York and other locations had been engaging in elements of strategic problem solving before the advent of Compstat like programs. Their results found that one third of departments surveyed reported having implemented or were in the process of implementing a Compstat-like program, with another quarter reporting they were planning to implement such a program. They also showed that chief executives of agencies who had implemented Compstat, compared to those had no plan to do so, placed a significantly higher importance on the organizational goal of reducing serious crime and improving officer's policing skills.

Intelligence led policing is used extensively in the United Kingdom, utilizing the National Intelligence Model (NIM) under the mandate of the National Policing Plan (Collier, 2006). The model was intended to replace the old way of basing police actions on intuition and experience with high quality intelligence. T&C (Tasking and Coordinating) meetings were utilized in departments to identify hotspots, trends, and repeat offenders in order to focus police and investigative activities. Besides utilizing data analyses of crime reports, intelligence is also gathered from prisoners, victims, and informants, all of which is incorporated into the intelligence system for assessment.

**Problems associated with officers' perceived value of intelligence.** When Willis, Mastrofski, and Weisburd (2007) examined the implementation of Compstat at three sites they

found that the driving forces behind adoption of Compstat was not organizational change designed to increase effectiveness but rather institutional pressures for the departments to appear more progressive and successful. Willis and his colleagues found departments emphasized Compstat's ability to confer legitimacy on the department and utilized Compstat elements in a way that invited the least amount of disruption in organizational routines. Compstat was less useful in assessing officer performance or in changing well established practices.

Compstat's usefulness to patrol officers may be limited as it may not assist them in receiving intelligence in a timely manner or indicating what they should do with the intelligence when received. It is crucial that the intelligence obtained from Compstat systems is disseminated efficiently and effectively. Dabney (2010) examined these operational realities with Compstat. His analysis focused on the organizational facets of Compstat in that Compstat should realign police operations in accordance with 1) gathering accurate and timely information, 2) designing effective tactics and strategies, 3) the rapid deployment of personnel and resources, and 4) relentless follow up and analysis. In officer interviews, Dabney found that officers viewed crime data as being more of an audit function than an analytical function that uses commanders to identify and prioritize problems. Officers complained that it is just a tally of crime with no operational component tied to it. When officers were given operational instructions derived from their commanders' Compstat meetings, officers felt that any operational message was diffused. Dabney cites as one example: if a rash of burglaries was occurring on a particular beat, commanders may relate that this beat needs an operational detail without providing clear instructions as to what to focus on. This left the officers with the impression they just need to make a large amount of arrests (cynically considering that it is done to make a commander look good at the next Compstat meeting).



Officers also felt that the intent of Compstat was not communicated, which prevented officers from understanding the goals and resulted in a lack of support for it. Dabney considered that a department's desire to quickly start utilizing Compstat for information dissemination could result in poor planning and implementation, which can lead to communication breakdowns. Sergeants, usually the first line of information for officers, are not privy to all the data and decision-making processes that go into Compstat generated directives, resulting in increased alienation and reduced productivity. Dabney also found that when directives and tactics are passed down to line officers, especially those that require coordination with other units, they often struggle to maintain this new structure and end up reverting back to the informal work rules that governed their behavior before imposed Compstat integration.

It would appear that if Compstat is to be used effectively, integration between decentralized units must be fostered and intelligence fully disseminated, and the core mission about the purpose and usefulness of Compstat must be effectively related to line officers. Ratcliffe and McCullagh's (2001) focus groups of officers indicated that besides issues of intelligence dissemination, which varied widely in its effectiveness, the quality of intelligence varied. For example, the intelligence they received about burglary hotspots was much better than the sparse and vague intelligence on auto crimes hotspots. The sparse intelligence was related to the fact many auto crimes would not receive an officer response unless clear evidence regarding the offender was available. With poor intelligence, officers were less enthusiastic to work the crimes. Collier (2006) found problems and gaps within the system that hampered the collection and dissemination of intelligence. Officers were willing to share intelligence across agencies on a personal level but were reluctant to enter it into the computer database. This may be partially understandable as many of the computer systems of the police forces were not linked to one

another, so officers would be unable to access intelligence information in adjoining jurisdictions. Criticism was also high regarding the quality of the intelligence with some describing it as useless, and of poor quality, believing analysts “don’t know what’s important” (Collier, 2006, p. 112) to the police. Others in the department complained about the lack of understanding of what analysts could do in order to provide actionable intelligence. In addition, increased use of intelligence had led other officers to question standard practices in policing when intelligence data suggests changing these practices could yield more effective results.

It is possible that this has led to a cultural change in policing, however it might be viewed more akin to a cultural disruption (Collier, 2006). As line officers and supervisors negotiate their way through organizational and operational pressures and changes, they may resist these changes. Collier argued that officers will tend to rely on more traditional methods of intelligence gathering as their behaviors are guided by the informal work rules established within the organizational culture.

Other research has found that organizational culture can hamper intelligence dissemination (Cope, 2004). Analysts felt that their intelligence assessments were disregarded because officers considered them too removed from the situations to be able provide actionable intelligence. Analysts also felt that officers were reluctant to share information. Information is a source of power and officers may be reluctant to share information that may potentially remove officer autonomy and enhance the status of analysts. These attitudes appeared to be reflected when former officers took on the role of analysts. Civilian analysts complained that though former officers had a wealth of knowledge, they were not very good at sharing information. This also may be a function of the value that officers find in the intelligence as civilian analysts also complained that officers have unrealistic expectations of intelligence, wanting only direct

actionable intelligence that leads to arrests rather than using the intelligence as an information source to assist in their duties.

A culture conflict between analysts and police officers may exist (Cope, 2004). Officer solidarity typically excludes analysts, where officers are regarded as the experts and primary sources of intelligence. A shift in the importance of intelligence has also led to a shift in the value that departments place on different knowledge brokers like analysts—that is, departments may focus on the value these brokers provide in an attempt to increase effectiveness and efficiency within the department.

### **Officers' Reliance on Their Own Intelligence Sources**

Cope (2004) suggests that officers look at crime problems quite differently than analysts, stating “police knowledge is contextual and grounded” (p. 199) and constructed through experience, which has framed how crime problems should be addressed. However, if this information is not passed on, recorded, and analyzed it can lead to what Cope referred to as “policing led intelligence”, which can undermine an intelligence led process. Officers rely, as they always have, on their experiential knowledge and give greater deference to this knowledge than they do information from analysts who, officers feel, have no idea what it is like to perform patrol work (Cope, 2004). Officers trust the knowledge base that they developed from working their beats. Conversely, information from other outside sources is not as highly regarded. If officers see little value in departmental-produced intelligence then they will rely more on intelligence obtained from their work environment, which includes the officer’s own experience, observations from other officers on the beat or in the district, and informants on the street (Cope, 2004).

The officer's work environment can not only produce the intelligence and experiential knowledge that officers utilize but officers' informal work rules are also formed by the environment. Studies show that these work rules can influence patrol behaviors. Stroshine, Alpert and Dunham (2008) found that officers view attitudes and behaviors driven by informal work rules to be effective and meaningful. This may help explain Klinger's (1997) contention that high crime or offense rates may condition the police to be laxer in patrolling these areas, with only the most severe offenses generating focused responses. Stroshine and colleagues (2008) also saw evidence that informal working rules may sometimes run counter to departmental expectations in officers' actions and stops. These informal work rules sometimes dictated officer responses, as in whether the officer thought the offense was serious enough to contend with, whether the officer had engaged in that behavior himself, and the demeanor and behavior of subjects toward the officer.

In negotiating their environment, officers will rely on their own experience. Environmental cues will also influence their behavior, specifically those individuals or events that stand out in terms of time, place, and behavior within the context of their beat and shift (Stroshine et al., 2008). These stand-out factors are identified through officers' experiences on the beat. Worrall (2013) suggests that police officers may either possess or develop a "sixth sense", an awareness that seems to combine aspects of suspicion, intuition, fear, and common sense. Referencing schemata theory in an attempt to define and assess what he referred to as a sixth sense, Worrall (2013, p. 312) contends that two types of knowledge, content knowledge ("knowledge about groups and events based on past experience") and frames (an "individual's worldview, values and concerns that help define the meaning of different situations") contribute to developing and utilizing experiential thinking. In experiential thinking, learning comes from

experience, is preconscious, nonverbal, and outcome-oriented. Information is processed through memories of events, association, narrative, and abstract cues. In contrast, in a rational thinking system, learning is more analytical, logical, relatively slow, demanding on cognitive resources, and process orientated. Worrall concedes that theory testing is necessary to determine if there is indeed a “sixth sense” (a strong orientation to experiential thinking over rational thinking) and whether police officers possess or utilize this type of thinking more than the general public.

Officers may also depend on other officers to provide intelligence about areas, individuals, and activities that need additional focus. Buren and Stenzel (1984) noted that shift-change overlap can vary and that insufficient information can be passed between officers on the shifts. An important aspect of officer intelligence that needs consideration, similar to departmental sources of intelligence, is the quality of the intelligence itself. Officers should view themselves as competent and define this competence to include extensive knowledge of their job and their beat. As “their” beat, officers might be expected to be familiar with a number of offenders in their beat, their characteristics, soft targets that need extra attention, as well as areas of their beat that provide little in the way of crime or concerns. This would lead to the expectation that officers should be aware to some degree of the crime hotspots within their beats.

Some research suggests officer perceptions of problems may differ from those of the employing department. In his quasi-experiment, Paulson (2004) sought to determine if highly disseminated hotspot intelligence affected officers’ ability to identify hotspots. The test group of officers were supplied with daily, weekly, and monthly hotspot information reports but, based on pretest-posttest scores in identifying hotspots, they did no better than the control group in correctly identifying hotspots. Paulson did find a significant difference between the groups in what they perceived as high crime areas. Test group officers’ responses indicated that they

glanced at the hotspot maps and reports at the start of the shift but did not refer to them during the shift. These officers stated they rely more on their own experience and information from other officers on areas requiring their attention than they did the hotspots information provided by the department.

The proper identification of hotspots by officers may be dependent on the type of crime. Ratcliffe and McCullagh (2001) found that officers correctly identified residential burglary hotspots between 62% and 90% of the time but were correct less than half the time when it came to identifying nonresidential burglary and auto crime hotspots. This may be due in part to the issue of intelligence dissemination referenced earlier by the officers in this study. Bichler and Gaines (2005) also examined police officers' ability to identify problem areas in their districts and found the complexity of the problems in a particular area were predictive of officers identifying it as a hotspot. Complex problems were more often correctly defined as hotspots and were significantly associated by officers with larger geographical and residential areas, whereas officers identified single problems more often occurring in business and commercial districts. Despite this, officer accuracy at identifying hotspots was only slightly better than 50%.

Paulson's study (2004) on the inability of officers to identify hotspots, did not explore in depth why officers ignored hotspot data maps and relied on their own information. Similar to the findings in other research, it might be that officers found, perceived, or had preconceived notions that the intelligence provided was of limited value. Without a way to interpret it into something actionable, officers may dismiss it in the way that officers did in Dabney's (2010) and Ratcliffe and McCullagh's (2001) studies; that it is simply a crime tally without any operational context behind it. Paulson (2004) suggests in his study that departments may be lacking an infrastructure that provides for and demonstrates the usefulness of transforming the crime data maps into

workable intelligence. In contrast to officers universally being directed in their patrol activities, Mastrofski (2004) contends that directed patrol in a “low discretion department” (i.e. where officers have a low degree of autonomy in how they perform their duties) may be received negatively by the rank and file as they must conform to more directives. Instead, directed patrol in a high discretion (high officer autonomy) department might be more conducive to officers incorporating directives into identifying their hotspots and developing their own problem-solving solutions.

## **PURPOSE OF CURRENT STUDY**

The purpose of the current study is to establish a better understanding of patrol officer behavior and decision making by using officers as the direct source of information. Officers' perspectives on why they do what they do will provide a fuller, more informed understanding needed to address and improve things like officer or departmental performance in crime prevention, effectiveness and efficiency within a beat, district, or department, and providing the tools needed by officers to perform their duties. The current study identifies three areas that could affect officers' patrol behaviors and their decision making: 1) views on efficiency and effectiveness, 2) officers' available time for patrol, and 3) forms and utility of intelligence. Lines of inquiry into these three areas were incorporated into the development of the interview questions and, ultimately, the two research questions, 1) how do officers manage their area of responsibility and 2) how do they use intelligence.

These identified areas are interrelated; intelligence capabilities and unassigned time affect the ability of officers to engage in what they perceive to be effective and efficient patrolling behavior. Departments seek to maintain and demonstrate efficiency and effectiveness in their patrol divisions by accounting for factors like officer performance, public expectations, resource allocation, and beat and patrol route design. In this regard, patrol officers are affected by departmentally structured mandates but have limited influence on their design or implementation. How these other factors are structured may dictate patrol behavior. If the size of a beat and the goals to be accomplished through patrol of that beat must be managed by the patrol officers, then within this context the officers themselves may find it necessary to determine what is efficient and effective in their actions.



For officers to demonstrate effectiveness and efficiency in their patrol activities, they must have the time necessary to conduct patrol. As noted by Webster (1970), Cordner (1979), Whitaker, (1981), and Famega (2003), this unassigned time for patrol varies widely based on the number of calls, which officers have little control over, as well as by the duties and tasks officers choose to engage in. Limitations on the amount of time for patrol, and the self-initiated activities that officers engage in, make it necessary for officers to have intelligence that allows them to operate efficiently and effectively. The type and amount of intelligence available, how well it is disseminated, and how officers consider the value of the intelligence they receive also affects their ability and willingness to utilize the information gleaned from intelligence to guide their patrol behavior.

The dual goals of effectiveness and efficiency of police patrol are salient for police organizations. These goals also carry importance for the public as these qualities can signal a reduced perception of crime and an increased perception of legitimacy, so it is important to examine how officers ensure their patrol behavior is effective and efficient. The field of policing has an ample amount of studies that examine officers' behaviors and actions, from the number of arrests and traffic stops officers make, to the factors that may be influencing the decision to stop or arrest, to the effectiveness of different patrol schemes like hotspot policing. However, there are still unanswered questions. What is missing from the literature on patrol is an examination of what officers do on patrol, where they do it, whether officers follow routes, and the necessary dosage of police operations (Wain and Ariel, 2014). Wain and Ariel (2014) contend that this occurs because typical methods used to track officer behavior generates negative reactions from the officers, thus preventing greater knowledge in this area. While these are notable gaps in what is known about patrol behavior, one question the current study seeks to explore was not broached

by Wain and Ariel (2014)-*Why* do officers patrol as they do. What are the influential, underlying factors, viewpoints, beliefs, or experiences that influence them in their decisions of how they patrol and how they manage their area of responsibility? Without the understanding of why, the how is simply an accounting of their behavior, not a deeper understanding. Contemporary literature on police patrol has neglected detailed examination from officers' perspective on patrol. Wain and Ariel (2014) note that officer-related accounts of patrol behavior are often limited to anecdotes of patrol incidents rather than an introspective examination of the value, expectations, prioritization, tactics, and limitations of patrol. This study aims to fill that gap. As Bayley and Bittner (1981) noted in their examination of the skills of policing:

The problem is that science has not illuminated the operational imperatives of the work that patrol officers do. Nor have police departments acknowledged that guidance could be useful. Crouched behind the statement that "every situation is different", they have failed to pay attention to what their own rank and file are telling them: namely that learning what works is possible and that it is taking place through the haphazard mechanism of individual experience (p. 47).

The officer's perspective is important to expand the base of knowledge on police patrol behavior. We need a better understanding of the value that officers place on patrol, the techniques and actions officers believe are efficient and effective, and whether they think they have sufficient time to engage in the behavior. We also need a better understanding of the nature of the intelligence available to officers; the sources, content, and whether this intelligence is utilized and valued. By examining officer perspectives and actions in these areas, we can consider how officers assess and monitor their beats despite perceived limitations in patrol time and departmentally derived intelligence. The officer perspective utilized in this study also provides an opportunity for a systematic evaluation of what officers do, know, and believe, and how these factors can potentially affect their behavior and decision making. A backdrop of contextual factors such as beat type and the officer's beat knowledge may inform their

individualized decision making in how they conduct patrol. Some of these influential factors, such as call volume, may affect officers across beat and shift as well, suggesting officers may adopt or utilize a generalized approach in dealing with some patrol situations.

The current study will address the following research questions: First, how do patrol officers manage their area of responsibility? In defining how officers manage their area of responsibility (typically their beat), consideration is given to the type of activities officer engage within the context of effectiveness and efficiency of patrol, their available time to patrol which shapes that context, as well as the officers' priorities, goals, and other factors that drive or influence their patrol decisions. This research question is examined from two perspectives, each influencing how officers manage their area of responsibility; how do officers view patrol work, such as their attitudes, goals, as well as purposes of patrol and how do officers perform patrol work such as techniques of patrol, beat coverage, and managing obstacles to their patrol. Secondly, how do patrol officers perceive and use intelligence? Specifically, examining the types and sources of intelligence, how intelligence is disseminated, when, and if, they utilize the intelligence, and the value or quality they assign the types and sources of intelligence. By investigating these processes, we gain a greater understanding of the way patrol officers conduct their work and insight into officers' perspectives on the utility of different sources of intelligence and their influence on patrol behavior.

## METHODOLOGY

The impetus behind choosing the subject matter of the current study came from a discussion in one of my graduate classes where the term “random patrol” was used to describe officer patrol utilizing their unassigned time. However, I felt the term random patrol was poorly defined, if not a misnomer. Rather than police officers wandering aimlessly about their beat in some random manner, I believed that in fact officers patrolled with a purpose and focus. Officers would engage in patrol activities that were time and area specific, they would prioritize certain activities or areas over others, and that they would hold certain goals they would try to accomplish on their shift. This belief was formed through some of my past experiences. Besides having been a private investigator for over 20 years, I spent over 10 years in the hospitality industry working as a security officer; I wore a duty belt carrying keys, a flashlight, expandable baton, handcuffs, first aid gear, and a radio, engaged in countless miles of foot patrol, and took calls for service that included medical assists, traffic accidents, vandalisms, thefts, verbal and physical domestics, suspicious behavior, noise complaints, drunk and disorderly individuals, and assaults. On quite a few occasions, I had to go “hands on”, that is, physically detaining, subduing, and handcuffing individuals.

During the course of performing my duties, I recognized that some areas needed my attention more than others, some areas needed that attention at different times, some areas and duties took priority over others, and that priorities for my patrol shifted depending on the day, time of day, and the different activities occurring within my area of responsibility.

It was from this view and belief about police officers that I was prompted to develop the current study. In this study, I went on ride-alongs with Fargo patrol officers, during which time, I observed patrol officers’ behaviors and conducted semi-structured interviews.

A qualitative methodology helps overcome the difficulties encountered when studying a closed culture like the police and addresses the limitations present in quantitative research. Westmarland (2008) stated that though there are problems of definition, the apparent existence of a police culture has attracted both quantitative and qualitative researchers. While police insularity and solidarity is on the decline, it is still a profession where its members view non-police personnel with suspicion as outsiders and develop their own internal group norms (Sklansky, 2007). For officers to comfortably and openly reveal their thoughts and feelings it must be to someone they trust, if not a member of the group, then someone that bears a similarity to or fits into the group; someone who at least has some level of understanding of the job and its characteristics. Quantitative surveys utilizing Likert scales will likely be insufficient to establish the level of trust between a researcher and officers for them to reveal intimate knowledge. The researcher must put themselves in the role of the participants and examine the world from their perspective in order to build that trust and rapport (Fontana and Frey, 1994). This trust can be built more effectively by working with officers in the field. The field work associated with qualitative research provides the opportunity for researchers to immerse themselves in the environment to build trust and a rapport with the people they are studying. In Li's 2008 study of female gamblers, she found that being seen as an "insider", being on the tour buses, and at casinos, built trust in her participants. Being immersed in the setting provides a researcher with an opportunity to show that they can fit in by similar activity participation and demonstration of an understanding of the environment and the people in it, thus building that trust.

By contrast, the surveys typically used in quantitative research have limitations compared to the open-ended style of questions often used in qualitative research and their analyses focus on statistics versus the underlying social reality that forms the responses (Olsen, 2004 as cited in

Cilliers, 1998). Survey questions can limit participant feedback to a few predetermined responses. It does not allow for nuance in response and limits discovery and exploration of new ideas. A grounded theory approach moves beyond the structure of quantitative research and allows information to develop through the interaction of participant and researcher (Barbour, 2001). Unlike surveys, a qualitative approach allows the researcher to continue down the research path presented by the participants. Engaging in a back and forth exchange between researcher and participant opens up new possibilities in the understanding and exploration of the information sought by the researcher and leads to other topics of inquiry and discovery. Rather than relying on a recalled, written account, researchers can observe examples and probe deeper on participants' responses when it occurs in real-time. The participants' environment provides a context to their responses and examples, which provides for a greater understanding of their responses and actions.

While there are advantages to utilizing a qualitative methodology, there are also limitations. While providing rich, detailed data, one criticism of the methodology is it does not lend itself well to generalizability to other populations (Myers, 2000). While there is a possibility of partial generalization to similar population, Myers points out that generalizability is not the focus of qualitative research but rather the exploration, and increased understanding of human experience. Sample selection in qualitative research is often purposeful however there are risks that without random sampling, the sample may not be representative of the population being studied. Neyman (1934) concluded that in only very limited circumstances is purposeful sampling as representative of the population as random sampling. I attempted to address both those limitations in the current study by including the frequency of the participants' coded responses and by using a stratified random sample. By relating the frequency of the themes and

responses some quantifiable aspects were produced which could serve comparative purposes while still providing the themes and rich data which portrayed officers' views and experiences. The themes that are discovered and explored can provide a deeper understanding of officer behavior, can inform police department decision making regarding the patrol division, and reveal new avenues of research concerning decisions involving the patrol divisions

While purposeful sampling is typically used in qualitative research, the perspective of a wide variety of officers was desired in the current study, one that would be representative of the patrol division. While not all patrol officers in the study department were included in the sample, a random stratified sampling technique was utilized to ensure no selection bias existed and that the sample was representative of the patrol division.

### **Ethical Considerations**

#### **Gatekeepers and Access**

Gaining access to the department was relatively problem-free. A fellow criminal justice graduate student was also a retired deputy chief with the department. He was able to find an occasion to mention my proposal to an Assistant Chief. The Assistant Chief then provided me with name of a Deputy Chief to approach with the research proposal. During the presentation of the proposal, I was made aware by the Deputy Chief of an intelligence format in use by the department called the Beat Ops Plan, and his interest in the results of officers' view of it. I subsequently incorporated the Beat Ops Plan as an intelligence source for the current study and developed interview questions to assess officers' view of this form of intelligence.

After some delays, the proposal was accepted and I negotiated access to the shift briefings and the length of the ride-along with the Deputy Chief that was currently overseeing the proposal. I initially requested to ride-along the entire shift but I was granted a five-hour

period, greater than the three-hour period normally allowed for ride-alongs. I was required to sign a waiver of liability and policy form that outlined the general conduct of ride-along participants, such as following the instructions of the officer and wearing appropriate clothing. The Deputy Chief provided a roster of patrol officer names with accompanying beat and shift information for my use in sample selection but was not able to provide any work schedules. To arrange for the ride-along/interviews, I initially forwarded a weekly list of potential participants with dates and shifts to the Deputy Chief so he could inform the shift sergeants. Later, as the number of remaining participants in the sample decreased, I coordinated more closely with the shift sergeants to schedule ride-along/interviews with the remaining officers.

### **Informed Consent and Disclosure**

IRB approval was granted for the current study which required informed consent from the participants. Before starting the formal interview process, typically in the squad car prior to leaving the station, officers were provided an informed consent form to sign which included the purpose of the study, their right to discontinue their participation in the research at any time, as well as statements regarding the confidentiality of their participation and anonymity of their responses. In presenting the form, I also briefed officers verbally on the focus of the study, and reinforced the confidentiality and anonymity protection they would receive. No officer refused to participate in the study, nor withdrew during the interview/ride-along.

Confidentiality and anonymity protection was established and maintained by de-identifying officers in interview documentation and study quotations. Officers' reference to another officer by name, the names of members of the public, subjects (that is, anyone who is the focus of the officer at that time) and their addresses, and the names of businesses and specific locations or areas on the beat, or their own assigned beat number were generically de-identified,



such as Officer X or Beat Y, replaced with pseudonyms, such as “Courtview”, or given as a general description such as, “a local grocery store”. In other instances, where officers related information that could make them identifiable, for example some beat and shift specifics, attempts were made to de-identify the responses to protect anonymity. Confidentiality and anonymity were also ensured by not asking officers questions in the presence of other officers or members of the public. Not only would this reveal that the officers were possibly taking part in some sort of study or survey but it would also expose their personalized responses to the public or other officers. Confidentiality and anonymity as a study participant amongst the other officers was not so easily accomplished. Shift sergeants would sometimes announce to the officer in briefing that I was riding with them that day, or just in the process of interaction after briefing, during multiple car runs on calls for service, or back at the station, officers on the shift knew who was participating, albeit not their responses to questions. Officers also shared among themselves that they had participated in the study but it is unknown to what degree they shared or discussed their responses, and if so, whether their responses influenced the responses of other officers.

Access in the field was negotiated with individual officers. Following officers signing the informed consent document, I asked them if they had objections to me accompanying them out of the car on traffic stops, with the understanding that I would position myself toward the rear on the passenger side of the vehicle. Only one officer requested I stay in the squad car during traffic stops and I typically enjoyed unfettered access in the activities of officers. There were three instances where officers had me hold back: once while they answered a burglary alarm call at a convenience store, once when officers had to search a house at night for a possible intruder, and once during the interview of a sexual assault victim. Outside of those instances, I accompanied officers on traffic stops, calls for services, investigations, surveillance, field contacts, interviews,

community events, and departmental and community meetings and participated, to the degree allowable, in their activities.

While I was clear and forthcoming about my role as a researcher and the intent of my research amongst the police administration and patrol officers, my role as a researcher was never made known to members of the public that were encountered on ride-alongs. Most individuals did not appear to question my presence at the scene; of the very few individuals who did inquire as to who I was, the officer's response of "he's with me", ended the discussion. A number of members of the public made the assumption I was a law enforcement officer and interacted with me in that manner, for example, attempting to relay their witness account, passing on intelligence, or providing a "police discount" on lunch but on a couple of occasions it resulted in derogatory comments aimed at me based on this assumption. On these occasions, I did not reveal my identity or purpose but in situations where individuals intended to provide a lengthy account, provide what could be crucial information to a case, or provide their side of the story in an incident, I directed the individual to "wait for the officer to take your statement". On a few occasions, the subject of a call, stop, or contact would appeal to both the officer and myself for lenience or answers and my responses, for example "the officer already told you what he decided" or "just listen to the officer", indicated I was always in deference to the officer's decision or action, without revealing my lack of authority to act upon the subject's request.

### **Study Setting**

According to the American Community Survey (ACS) estimate for 2015, the City of Fargo encompassed 48.2 square miles, had a population of 113,658, a population density of 2,358 people per square mile, and a median income of \$46,175 (American Community Survey estimate, 2015). The ACS indicated that the racial and ethnic makeup of Fargo consisted of

88.4% White, 3.7% Black, 2.9 % Hispanic, and 3.3% Asian. Demographic data also indicated there had been increases in minority populations (Black 68%, Hispanic 38%, and Asian 27%) since 2010 and a 17% increase in foreign born citizens since 2014.

The Fargo Police Department employed 178 total personnel, 156 which were sworn police officers. The department utilized both Compstat and a full time civilian crime analyst. The Field Services Division, which included beat patrol, motor patrol (motorcycle officers who exclusively do traffic enforcement), school resource officers (SROs), and street crimes, was comprised of 95 officers, 13 sergeants, 4 lieutenants, and a Deputy Chief who cover four districts, with three beats in each district.

Prior to data collection in the late spring and summer of 2015, the Fargo police department underwent some personnel changes. In November 2014, the Fargo Forum newspaper reported on the results of a September 2014 police review panel examining morale in the department. The panel was created following the suicide of a department lieutenant, which some officers blamed on Police Chief Ternes' disciplinary process. (Tran, 2014). The panel reported that morale in the department suffered as officers perceived they were overworked by an administration that showed little support for officers. In November 2014, Chief Ternes resigned as well as a deputy chief who was instrumental in the development and use of a form of directed patrol called the Beat Ops Plan (discussed later in this study), and Deputy Chief David Tod was appointed interim Chief.

Officers patrol with one officer to a car and three shifts are utilized. A 10-hour day shift that begins at 7:15 am, a 10-hour evening shift that begins at 4:30 pm and a 9-hour night shift that starts at 10:45 pm. See Table 1 for the sample's shift distribution per district

The shifts, because of the different activities that occur during different times of the day, may affect how officers patrol. Some shifts may experience greater call volume limiting officers time to patrol and the different shifts may afford officers different opportunities for self-initiated activities. The shift characteristics are discussed in more detail in the results chapter. Different districts may influence how officers patrol based on their characteristics (see Figures A2-A5).<sup>1</sup> District 1 [containing beats 11, 12, and 13] is a large district in the northern part of the city and contained older residential neighborhoods with schools, churches, localized businesses areas and a large under-developed area. District 2 [containing beats 21, 22, and 23] was more centrally located in the city and also contained older, but lower SES, residential neighborhoods and had few larger or retail businesses. District 3 [containing beats 31, 32, and 33] covered the south-east end of the city. The area to the south was expanding and it contained new residential area, retail businesses, and developing areas. District 4 [containing beats 41, 42, and 43] was a very large district covering the west and south-west areas of the city and had a mix of newer residential areas, many major traffic thoroughfares, large areas of retail businesses, liquor establishments and restaurants, as well as newly developed residential and business areas.

### **Sample**

A multi-stage random sample was drawn from the population of Fargo police department patrol officers (excluding sergeants). At the time of sample selection, there were 83 sworn patrol officers, of which seven were new hires and still in the training (PTO) process, one was on military leave, and one was assigned as the downtown resource officer. These officers were removed from the population resulting in a total of 74 officers from which the sample was

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix for Figures A1-A5

drawn. These officers were divided into their respective districts (with each of the four districts containing three beats) (see Figure A1 map for beat and district location). District one had 18 officers, District 2 had 19 officers, District 3 had 18 officers, and District 4 had 19 officers. Each district was then subjected to random stratified sampling. With the intent to sample 75% of this population,<sup>2</sup> 75% of the officers in each district were randomly selected. From each of the four districts, an officer was chosen at random and then every third officer was chosen for inclusion in the sample, resulting in a total sample of 54 officers.

Table 1

*District by shift assignment for sampled beat patrol officers*

DISTRICT					
SHIFT	District1	District 2	District 3	District 4	Total
Day Shift	42.9% (n=6)	29.4% (n=5)	30.8% (n=4)	40.0% (n=6)	n=21
Evening Shift	21.4% (n=3)	47.1% (n=8)	46.2% (n=6)	33.3% (n=5)	n=22
Night Shift	35.7% (n=5)	23.5% (n=4)	23.1% (n=3)	26.7.8% (n=4)	n=16
	n=14	n=17	n=13	n=15	N=59

Before they could be selected for the ride-along and interview, there were three drop outs from the original sample because of a change from a patrol assignment to a different assignment and randomly sampled replacements were drawn. Five additional participants that were not randomly selected in the sampling process were included in the study. This occurred when the

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<sup>2</sup> While I would have preferred to have interviewed all the active patrol officers, time constraints involved in data collection and project completion suggested utilizing 75% of patrol officers chosen through random sampling of the population, in order to strengthen the methods, allow for interviews with the majority of officers, and to allow for timely completion of the project.

researcher arrived at the station and learned that the scheduled interviewee had taken the day off, called in sick, was engaged in PTO with a trainee, or for some other reason was unavailable.

When no previously randomly selected officer was available, ride-alongs were drawn from the officers (or arbitrarily assigned by a sergeant on a few occasions) that were available on the particular shift on that date. This resulted in a total of 59 officers being interviewed.

The 59 officers interviewed were categorized into groups that would allow for an examination of differences that might exist within the sample based on physical age, length of time as a police officer and education.<sup>3</sup> (Tables 2-3). No groupings were performed based on gender or race and ethnicity as there were few female officers and almost no racial and ethnic diversity within the sample. Based on my observations of personnel within the patrol division, and from the departmental list of patrol officers, the sample was representative of the population of patrol officers; almost exclusively White, and the clear majority male.

Officers' ages ranged between 23 and 57. Initially, officers were categorized into three age groups; between the ages of 23 and 30, between the ages of 31 and 45, and between the ages of 46 and 57. Officers' experience (which officers calculated from their hire date and included their training program time with the department) ranged from 7 months to 31 years. Officers with 5 years or less experience as a civilian police officer were categorized as novice officers, officers with 6 to 10 years of experience were categorized as experienced officers while those officers with 11-15 years were categorized as established officers, and those with 16 or more years of experience were categorized as veteran officers. Crosstab analysis showed some of the experience and age categories were highly correlated. Almost 80% of novice officers were

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<sup>3</sup> There was little variation in officer education. All of the officers had some degree of college education; 73% had Bachelor degrees, 5 % had, or were pursuing a Master's degree, and the remaining 22 % had Associate degrees.

between the ages of 23 and 30, and almost 80% of experienced officers were between the ages of 31 and 45. Officers between the ages of 46 and 57 also only made up 14% of the sampled officers. Some age and shift categories were also highly correlated. No officers between the ages of 23 and 30 in the sample worked the day shift, no officers between the ages of 45 and 57 worked the evening shift and only one officer in this age category worked the night shift. In consideration of these relationships, officer age was not an analytical focus in favor of officer experience.

Table 2

*Officer age by officer experience*

EXPERIENCE					
AGE	Novice < =5 years	Experienced 6-10 years	Established 11-15 years	Veteran 16 + years	Total
23-30	79.2% (n=19)	21.4% (n=3)	0.0% (n=0)	0.0% (n=0)	n=22
31-45	20.8% (n=5)	78.6% (n=11)	87.5% (n=7)	46.2% (n=6)	n=29
46-57	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	12.5% (n=1)	53.8% (n=7)	n=8
	(n=24)	(n=14)	(n=8)	(n=13)	100% (n=59)

The 59 officers interviewed were also categorized into groups that would allow for an examination of differences that might exist within the sample based on district and shift. The four districts divided the city up into geographic areas, often using major thoroughfares as boundary lines. Each district contained three beats that while similar in some characteristics, also had some dissimilar characteristics and varied in size. The individual beats will be discussed in more detail in a following chapter.

Table 3

*Officer experience by shift*

EXPERIENCE	SHIFT			
	Day Shift	Evening Shift	Night Shift	Total
Novice < =5 years	0.0% (n=0)	68.2% (n=15)	56.3% (n=9)	(n=24)
Experienced 6-10 years	28.6% (n=6)	27.3% (n=6)	12.5% (n=2)	(n=14)
Established 11-15 years	28.6% (n=6)	0.0% (n=0)	12.5% (n=2)	(n=8)
Veteran 16 + years	42.8% (n=9)	4.5% (n=1)	18.7% (n=3)	(n=13)
	100% (n=21)	100% (n=22)	100% (n=16)	100% (n=59)

**Data Collection**

A qualitative research approach was utilized for this study as it allowed for the discovery of more detailed and intimate information than could be gathered from just survey data. By being present within the work environment and interacting in this environment with the officer, I gained a greater understanding of the officer’s experience and officers had to explain less and could show more in relating their experiences and the nuances of their work environment. I also felt that by being present with the officers and experiencing what they experienced, that a better rapport was established that facilitated open and honest communication than could have been obtained through a survey or an interview conducted in the static, sterile setting of an office or conference room.

Gathering data in this manner presented some challenges. The dispatch radio and traffic and vehicle noise occasionally came through on the recorded audio, sometimes making



responses difficult to hear clearly in the transcription process. Dispatches for calls for service would interrupt the questions or answers and as I quickly learned, as officers got closer to the call they disengaged from the questions I asked so they could focus on the call that they were approaching, in a sense “getting their head in the game”. As questions were not asked in front of other officers or members of the public, on shifts with a high number of calls for service or lengthy, involved calls, it sometimes became challenging to fit all the interview questions into the five-hour ride-along period I was allowed. While some ride-alongs did extend past the five hours because of a high number or lengthy calls for service, I tried to be respectful of the officers’ time and completed the interviews in the time granted. Consequently, a few questions were not asked of all 59 officers and those reduced number of responses are noted in the results chapters.

Data collection occurred between May 15 and July 29, 2015 and involved in-depth interviews using both closed and open questions from a semi-structured interview guide. Officers’ responses were probed to elicit more details as necessary. Data was also obtained through observation of the officers during the ride-alongs where the interviews were conducted and field notes were collected.

## **Interviews**

All the officers were ensured confidentiality and anonymity, all the officers consented to the interview/ride-along, and all the officers agreed to having the interview audio-recorded via handheld digital recorder. The interview questions (see interview question guide in Appendix 1) were designed to elicit the officers’ views and thoughts on how they prioritize the start of their shift, the purposes of patrol, goals for their shift, their patrol methodology and techniques, how they developed their methodology, how they felt about patrolling, and the qualities of a good

patrol officer. Officers were also asked about what they thought was effective and efficient for conducting patrol, the extent officers patrol, how they manage beat coverage, how they thought dispatch affects their patrolling and obstacles to their ability to patrol. These questions were designed to provide some insight in to how officers manage their beat and duties with a depth that is missing from the contemporary literature on policing.

Additional interview questions were designed to elicit from officers the extent of their beat knowledge, their recognition of problem areas and problem people, and cues and signals on their beat that draw their attention. Other questions explored their views on directed patrol, the utility and value of officer and departmentally derived intelligence, how well the department understands their intelligence needs, and the nature of communication within the department. These questions allowed for a more nuanced examination of police intelligence use and whether the study department officers held negative views of intelligence, similar to what was described in the literature review, as well as possible reasons for these negative views, if present.

### **Trust, Rapport, and the Participant Observer Role**

Because of the nature of qualitative research, it is essential to build trust and a rapport with the study participants in order for them to be comfortable enough to reveal information, feelings, and insights (Dickson-Swift, James, Kippen, & Liamputtong, 2007). Building this trust and rapport was, in part, enhanced by my experience in security and investigation which I incorporated into a participant observer role. Because of my prior experiences, I tried to act more as a partner in the field, and rather than overtly making statements about my past experiences, I applied them to the current circumstances. My experiences gave me the knowledge in how to stand, where to stand, how to speak, and what to look for when interacting with subjects.

I spent approximately 320 hours with the officers in the department during the data collection period. I took field notes and referenced them for my observations and conclusions regarding calls for service and self-initiated activities that are noted throughout this study. I attended the briefings and went on an average of two five-hour ride-alongs per day. The ride-alongs presented not only an opportunity to interview officers in their work environment but allowed me to take a participant-observer role. A participant-observer approach has some advantages over just conducting interviews. A participant observer approach allows the researcher to learn the slang and workplace language of participants which assists in understanding their culture. It also gives the researcher the opportunity to observe that which participants may be unwilling or unable to talk about and helps the researcher see through the distortions of perception participants may experience that comes from a subjective view of a situation or circumstances in the workplace. Participant observation also allows the researcher to depend less on assumptions drawn from interview statements relating to events and allows the researcher to put participants' responses within the context of their work environment and observes how changes in that environment affect participants (Becker and Geer, 1957)

During the ride-alongs I accompanied, and participated with, the officers on all manner of calls including traffic stops. This also allowed me insight into what officers experienced in making traffic stops. In a practical sense, this entailed me taking a position on the passenger side of the stopped vehicle, out of the direct line of sight of the occupants (so their attention was focused on the officer), observing the officer, and remaining observant for suspicious behavior from the vehicle occupants.

The calls varied widely and included officers responding to, and taking reports for, both personal and property crimes, disturbances, burglary alarm calls, fights and assaults, drug

activity, welfare checks, suspicious behavior, and firearms related calls (e.g., shots fired or man with a gun) among others. My participant observer role during calls occurred with very little negotiation but just engaged in, on occasion by request of the officer, and never with censure. Typically, I just accompanied the officer(s) wherever they went, helped the officer when I could, took appropriate initiative, and basically attempted to act as a partner to the officer. For example, I assisted a number of officers in a search for a dead body by a river, found the body (which turned out be a passed out male laying in the brush), and informed officers. On occasion, I directed individuals to interact with the officer, I asked questions of witnesses, I once gave authoritative commands to a subject, and on a call responding to a mentally disturbed, violent individual, I noticed and secured a weapon within reach of the subject.

Some of those calls culminated in arrests that ranged from non-confrontational to those requiring the use of force in a violent encounter with subjects. While most occasions where officers arrested or detained an individual were without incident, some of those occasions turned quickly. For example, a response to a complaint about firecracker use (which might have been handled by a simple warning to most offenders), resulted in the tasing of one enraged subject and I helping to subdue and handcuff the other subject.<sup>4</sup> As officers patrolled, I also participated in the officers' self-initiated activities. These activities included traffic enforcement, foot patrol, surveillance, Community Oriented Policing, order maintenance, and investigative activities. For example, at the officer's request, I relayed visible license plate information to the officer to run, I searched my own area of a vacant, newly constructed apartment building when an officer

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<sup>4</sup> Prior to the arrest of the two subjects, I established verbal control of one subject after he had been tasered, while the officer had a physical confrontation with the other subject. After the arrival of a backup officer I then assisted my ride-along officer with subduing and handcuffing the other subject.

discovered the building door open late at night, and I helped an officer pick up debris in the roadway to help prevent an accident. On one occasion, an officer and I walked through waist-high weeds, ankle-deep water, and clouds of mosquitoes in order to check a fence line that had been targeted by a burglary the night before.

I incorporated a participant-observation approach as much as possible to gain a better understanding of the nature of patrol officer work and what it is like to perform the duties of a patrol officer. It also helped in building a rapport with the officers. When not conducting the interviews during the ride-alongs, I tried to function less as a ride-along participant and more like a partner to the officer. While patrolling, I kept my eyes and ears open and on occasion alerted officers to different situations like a fight, an open door, passed out individuals, or other notable observations. I alerted officers to individuals approaching a scene, and took a flanking position, as a partner would, when officers spoke with subjects. I informed officers of things I observed or heard on scene and related intel that I had, or that other officers had, on subjects that officers were involved with currently.

In attempting to function as a partner to the officers through immersion and participation in their activities, I hoped to establish my value to the officers to both lessen the impression of being an outsider and build trust and rapport by presenting myself as a dependable, knowledgeable, and useful resource. For that reason, it was important for me to participate in the briefings. Briefing not only inform officers of important events concerning their shift but it also acts as a social function for informal discussion and shared humor that can set the tone for the day. I felt it was important to be present at briefings in an attempt to share in this experience and integrate myself, not as an outsider, but as a group member, readying myself for the workday.

I felt that I was successful in building this trust and rapport. Almost all the officers were very engaged in the interview process and freely expressed their views regarding the interview questions, the police administration, the community, and policing in general, as well as some aspects of their personal lives. Officers' reactions to my presence ranged from neutral to positive. Some officers remarked they had negative experiences in the past with researchers or ride-along participants but viewed this experience positively. This trust, I believe, was further developed following a shift sergeant giving me recognition during briefing for assisting an officer by going "hands-on" with an offender.

From my experience in the field, participant observation provided a unique perspective that elucidated behavior of the study participants and allowed me to experience and better understand that behavior by putting myself in situ. It provided an opportunity to understand the nuances and contexts of the environment and experience how they may influence officer behavior and decision making in a way unlike other data collection procedures.

### **Positionality and Reflexivity**

As the researcher for this study, and in my role of researcher as a data collection instrument, attention must be paid to possible subjectivity and reflexivity that stems from my own positionality (Bourke, 2014). As discussed above, I was cognizant that police officers may view me as an outsider. Police officers have an occupational culture that suggests they might be resistant to sharing their views or revealing their behavior to someone not in their group (Skolnick and Hazard. 1966). I hoped to mitigate this through building a strong rapport with officers and utilizing the participant observer role, trying to subtly incorporate my own somewhat similar work experiences into that role to help serve as a conduit for examining and understanding patrol work from the officers' perspective. While I felt I was successful in this

regard, with the vast majority of officers being very forthcoming about their attitudes and behaviors, the occasional joking comment about me being a spy or reporting to the Chief, as well as a couple light-hearted comments by officers about “getting fired” following their admission of a negative viewpoint concerning the administration or department, reminded me of my position as an outsider.

Other factors contributed to my positionality; my identity as a White male and my past experiences with law enforcement. As a White male, my position was similar to the majority of officers in the department, and, in regard to my race, the community at large. While this may have contributed to the rapport built with officers, it may have also contributed to how I was perceived, as I accompanied officers, by minority members of the public as well as limiting my understanding of the perspective of minorities to police interactions. My positionality was also defined by my past experiences with the police and my academic knowledge of policing. My academic knowledge expanded my understanding of the actions and motivations of police officers. In the course of employment as a security officer and private investigator I experienced both positive and negative interactions and assessments with the police. As a young man, while a few encounters with the police were experienced positively, I was also subjected to a shakedown, theft, illegal searches, coercion, and harassment by police officers. These experiences, both positive and negative, had a hand in shaping my perspective of the police coming into the current study that recognized both the best and worst of policing.

### **Data Analysis**

I used Atlas.ti software in the analysis of the qualitative data. It assisted in determining and organizing the prevalent themes, sub themes and interconnections surrounding officer attitudes, opinions, and exhibited behaviors regarding their ability to manage their area of

responsibility, including what officers determine to be effective and efficient in their beat management, the use of their available time, and their use and views on different forms of intelligence.

I utilized an analytic format, suggested by Friese (2014), as one appropriate and productive for the analytic software. First, very broad, general themes are identified in the analysis of the recordings and transcripts and assigned codes. Subsequent, repeated analyses of the transcripts allow for the development of smaller sub-themes within the larger thematic categories. These sub-themes and any subsequent thematic development are coded as well. The coding process facilitates the analysis of multiple layers of data as well as facilitates grouping themes and sub-themes into larger categories, or families for additional analysis (Friese, 2014). Interview responses were initially coded into 44 general identifier categories which pertained to the subject of the interview questions or to subjects that arose during the interviews. Their content was then coded into themes and sub-themes which resulted in 1,240 codes. Coded themes were also grouped into families to assist in the development of themes as well as for analysis. Code families and some individual codes were in some instances analyzed across the different officer descriptive categories.

As suggested by Friese (2014), I based thematic development both on the content of the questions and on an emergent data. For example, while the content of the question on how officers feel about the act of patrolling would suggest a range of responses, the nature, wording, and emotion associated with the responses allowed the themes, and subsequent codings to develop. These analyses also identified subjects and themes not anticipated by the interview questions but that emerged from the interview process. For example, while not addressed by a



specific interview question, the theme of officer discretion was identified, as well as the sub-themes relating to the context when that discretion is used.

In support of a grounded theory approach, the themes were developed by noting the emergence of common views, attitudes, and approaches (Friese, 2014). To better quantify how common a perspective was, percentages were calculated for the themes and codes. These percentages were used in the reporting on both the adherence or support for a theme or code as well as those that had less support. In this way both common officer responses or themes were presented as well as those in the minority. In some cases, with the wide variety of responses provided by officers to some questions, some coded responses or themes were too few to be included in the reporting. In these broad-based responses, codes or themes that encompassed less than five percent of the responses typically were not reported unless they provided a sharp contrast to another theme or provided additional valuable insight into an issue. To further illustrate the responses, counter-points, codes, and themes, numerous officers' quotes on the relevant subjects were included as well.

## HOW OFFICERS VIEW PATROL WORK

The first research question examines how officers manage their area of responsibility. Area of responsibility is defined as the officer's beat but it can also encompass the district that the officer's beat is in as officers typically crossed beats within their district to assist other officers or cover beats not currently serviced by an officer. There are two overarching themes regarding area management; how officers view patrol work and how officers do patrol work. In this chapter, I examine how officers view patrol work. It is important to uncover and explore the mindset that officers have regarding patrol as it will frame the way they approach their work and manage their area of responsibility as well as provide the motivation and reasoning behind the activities that they engage in that assist them in managing their area. Major themes included what officers believed the purposes of patrol were and how those purposes were served, how officers felt about patrolling, and officers' goals and preferences within patrol work.

### Purposes of Patrol

#### Identifying the Purposes of Patrol

To understand how officers view and manage their area of responsibility (their beat or district), it is important to examine what officers think the purpose or purposes of their patrol are and how they serve those purposes. Officers typically believed there were multiple purposes to patrol that can be grouped into six themes: *community visibility*, which meant being out on the streets and being seen by the citizens to let the public know they are "on the job", *crime prevention* which meant that patrolling officers can proactively correct a criminogenic situation, like closing an open garage door, or prevent crime in real time by apprehending individuals engaged in criminal activity, *deterrence*, in that officer presence will dissuade would be law violators from engaging in illegal acts, *increased availability for calls* which meant that

patrolling keeps officers on the beat and close to their potential calls for service, ideally assisting in the speed of their response, *public safety and assistance*, in that the officer presence allows them to provide all manner of assistance to citizens including comfort and aid following an accident or criminal incident, information about crime prevention and the law, and material support like assisting with vehicle break downs. and *traffic enforcement* in that motorized patrol is an effective means to enforce traffic laws. Three themes were mentioned most frequently: community visibility, crime prevention, and deterrence.

Fifty-one percent of the officers identified community visibility as a central purpose of patrol. Officers referenced different objectives to community visibility including public relations, alleviating fear of crime, and establishing themselves as part of the community. As Officer 25 put it, “For me the number one purpose is to be visible, to be out there, getting in contact with your community. We are, kinda, the face of the department, people see us, see the uniform. When you're driving through their neighborhood they know you're there. Really, I think you should be visible, try to be out there as much as you can be, don't stay in the station, ya know.” Being visible to the public was also viewed as a way to alleviate fear of crime. For example, Officer 40 said, “The main purpose in my view is to be seen by the public. The more people that see you the more comfortable they'll be that you're there and that if anything does happen, they feel safe.”<sup>5</sup> By being visible officers also demonstrated that they are part of the community and want to be involved with the citizens. For example, Officer 42 said, “I think the presence is the most important and I think just getting out into the community and trying to talk people, you know? Like they talk about community oriented policing, if we can do more of that. I think that's

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<sup>5</sup> However, this idea runs counter to Kelling and colleagues' 1974 experiment that demonstrated that fear of crime was not affected by proactive patrol.

pretty important but obviously you need to be there when the community needs your assistance.” Or as Officer 20 put it, “Now for me I think patrolling is ultimately your opportunity to make contact with the public so whether I’m doing it on bike, whether I’m doing it on foot, or whether in a car, I am out there to be seen— but I also like to stop and talk to people. And as far as people are raised to believe cops are the bad people and don’t ever—they scare their kids to death, [by saying things like] cops are going to throw you in jail for no reason—so I like to get out there.”

Many officers (44%) also said that patrol played an important part in crime prevention. By being on the street and being active and observant officers believed they could have an actual effect on crime in the area. The officers described different aspects to crime prevention related to patrol. Officer 72 spoke about securing property and educating citizens. “Crime prevention. There’s a lot of times when we’re driving around in residential neighborhoods we see open garage doors, things like that, I’ll try and make contact with the owners, try to educate them as to why it’s important to secure their items or property in the hopes they won’t be a victim later.”

Officers also said that crime could be prevented by officers stopping suspicious vehicles or making field contacts. In field contacts, officers stop an individual on foot or bicycle to ask as to who they are, where they are going, the reason for their business in the area, and other lines of inquiry. They do this for the purpose of identifying these individuals and gathering intelligence that might be pertinent to the officer or law enforcement. Officer 51 said, “I’d say the times the patrol makes those initial contacts with people we’re kinda looking after the people that are causing problems. You wanna make those traffic stops, and say ‘Hey, we’re on you guys, we’re watching you guys.’ Maybe stopping them from committing crimes that they might have committed [later] that night.”

Some officers mentioned crime prevention in the context of focusing on problem areas. Officer 39 said that when he patrols he is “Looking for certain issues in places, whether it’s on your beat or in your district, such as, if an area is having problems with burglaries, or car prowlers, or any issues that might be coming up in a beat, we like to focus and actively look for those issues to try to knock 'em off.” Other officers, like Officer 37, had hopes of catching criminals in the act and stopping crime from occurring; “You're out there, you're in the community trying to stop things before they happen but I'm a realist. The odds of that happening are very slim but you can always get lucky and find and stop something before it happens but I think getting your presence out there, people seeing you driving around, they know there’s a chance you might be there if they need help or anything like that so I think that’s probably the main point of patrol, to try to combat things before it happens.”

Many officers (42%) also felt that deterrence of criminal behavior was also a purpose of patrol. While officers noted that visibility in the community established a positive presence for citizens, their visibility also played a role in the deterrence of potential lawbreakers. Officers patrolling through neighborhoods, around bars, and through problem areas or hotspots, sends a message to would be criminals that certainty of detection is high because officers are present and on the lookout, with the hope that this visibility will deter these would-be criminals from committing illegal acts. For example, Officer 44 said, “I would say deterrence, deterring people from driving too fast, getting into accidents, deterring people from having the ability to drink and drive ‘cause they see you out there, even people who wanna go car prowl, steal things, keepin' 'em inside ‘cause they see you out and about.” Similarly, Officer 70 said, “...while demonstrating we’re out looking for stuff to provide some deterrence. Like driving past a bar at closing time, it may deter someone from driving intoxicated, they’ll see we’re around and maybe

make that decision not to drive.” Officers especially thought this deterrent effect generated by their visibility was present and effective in traffic enforcement. One officer explained,

If we're not out there patrolling then people aren't obeying the speed limits, they think they can get away with things. They might see a squad car, even if I'm not running radar you can see the front-end dive down every time [from people braking]. Even if I am running radar and they're not going that fast, you'll see their speed drop way down when they see a squad car, so you know that your presence is slowing them down. And then they're stopping at yellow lights instead of flooring it at a yellow light, trying to get through. You see that a lot. Just being out in the open in a marked squad car makes people more conscious of their driving.

While it was considered one of the primary purposes of patrol, many officers recognized there were few indications of whether any deterrence was actually occurring. This view was in line with research findings from Kelling and colleagues' 1974 experiment that indicated that deterrence did not seem to occur with additional proactive patrol. For example, Officer 16 in discussing deterrence on patrol noted, “[Behind a neighborhood grocery store] ...that's by far my worst area, so I drive around a lot around there just maybe 'cause the bad guys think, 'Ok, there's a cop I better not break in right now'. I'm probably not going to catch anyone doing it or anything. I don't know that you can show that has been valuable but I think if you're a bad guy and you see me drive by ten times you might think a little bit. I don't know that I could show that for sure, he might break in at night [later] but...”

Another officer also said the effectiveness of the deterrent effect can vary depending on the patrol area. “Well for me, the purpose is I just wanna be visible. I don't think having a patrol car out driving around necessarily does a lot to prevent crime unless if I'm in very specific areas at times. Like Courtview trailer park. I know we can make a difference there and we have details where we have an officer there, sitting in the park. That makes a difference, usually nothing happens when we're sitting right there, but that isn't feasible to do most of the time.”

Other patrol purpose themes emerged with less frequency. Some officers also said that the purposes of patrol related to increased availability for calls (22%), public safety and assistance (17%), and traffic enforcement (12%). If officers are out on the street rather than in the station, they can respond to calls quicker. By patrolling, officers can also offer assistance and information to citizens in trouble or who have concerns about their safety, in general just being of service to the public. Officers can also provide reassurances to the public following a criminal incident, letting the public know that someone is watching out for them and following up on their safety.

A few officers identified traffic enforcement—ensuring that rules and laws are followed, and attempting to reduce accidents—as an important purpose of patrol. Officer 51 explained, “One of them [purpose of patrol] is for safety, for all the drivers really. Making sure you're finding people who are violating ordinances, possibly causing accidents, stop that before it happens.” Officer 68 also considered that traffic enforcement helped raise the awareness of traffic safety in all drivers, “...traffic enforcement, we all are responsible for traffic enforcement. I think by actively patrolling even though there's an argument that you only pick those locations that seem to produce accidents, I would submit that by enforcing traffic in other areas you're changing a mindset that will prevent those accidents from happening.”

**Purposes by type of officer.** While officers identified community visibility, crime prevention, and deterrence as the primary purposes of patrol, the focus on particular purposes varied by officers' shift, district, and experience. Within the descriptive categories some purpose themes stood out more prominently than others (Figure 1).

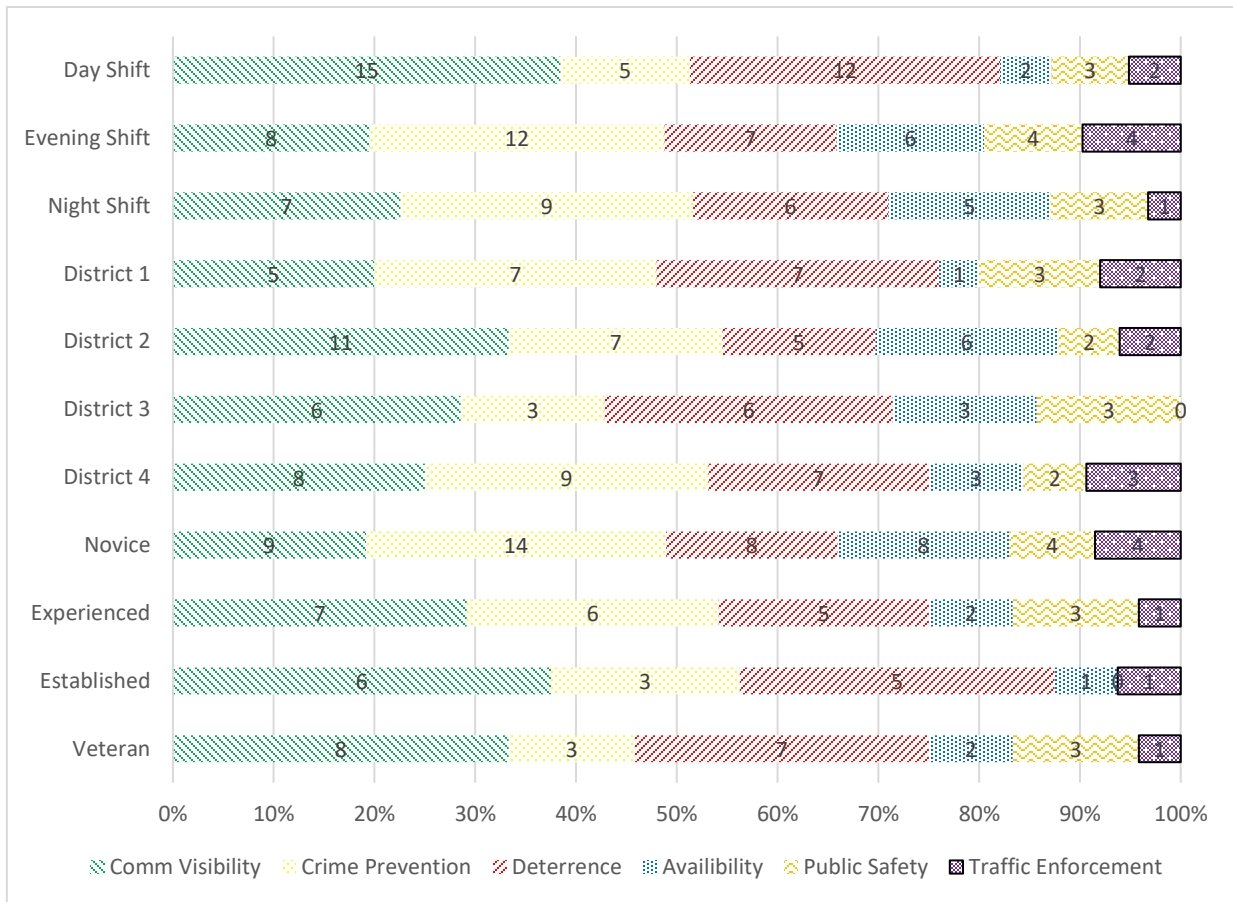


Figure 1. Percentage of officers referencing patrol purpose by shift, district, and experience

While day shift officers tended to view community visibility and deterrence more frequently as the purposes of patrol, the evening and night shifts viewed the purpose as being one of crime prevention. Some differences were noticed by district with District 2 tending to view the purpose as one of community visibility. Among the three main purposes, crime prevention was more frequently referenced by novice officers but the frequency of how often crime prevention was mentioned as a purpose of patrol varied with experience. Among experienced officers there was more equal mention of the three



main purposes—community visibility, crime prevention, and deterrence, but established and veteran officer tended to reference community visibility and deterrence more than crime prevention.

### **How Officers Serve the Purposes of Patrol**

What officers considered the purposes of patrol were will dictate to a certain degree what patrol activities they engaged in to serve those purposes. After officers were asked to identify what they believed the purpose(s) of patrol was, they were asked how they served that purpose(s). The purposes officers described were categorized into six themes of community visibility, crime prevention, deterrence, rapid response, public assistance, and traffic enforcement. With large percentages of officers referencing community visibility, crime prevention, and deterrence, there were a few commonly mentioned ways that officers serve these purposes such as community interaction, focused patrol, effective traffic enforcement and maintaining a high level of visibility.

Considering community visibility being one of the primary purposes of patrol, many officers (34%) tried to serve their identified purposes by attempting community interaction. This interaction was typically described as establishing positive community contacts. Officers tried to leave the public a positive impression of police officers and what they were trying to do. As this officer explained, “A lot of times when we're driving through a lot of these apartment complexes around the mall, and in the mall, people love stickers, I got a whole stack of stickers [given out for public relations], and get out and stop and talk, just being friendly, being out there, being available to people for questions. When I do patrol I don't always do enforcement actually and a lot of people just stop and ‘Hey I just got some weird law enforcement question I wanna know about’ so I'll try and answer.”

Officer 17 considered it this way, “If somebody’s standing at a crosswalk and I’m pullin’ up to a stop sign instead of just keepin’ my windows rolled up, I’ll stop and talk and joke with them or I’ll stop and say hi, and obviously depending on mood, you can just not be in the mood to do it—ya know sometimes we have those days, horrible days, when it makes it hard to do that stuff. But it’s also the kinds of things that make your day a little better.”

Officers try to be seen and interact with the community in various locations for example, by stopping at the schools on their beat and though community involvement. This officer said, “You know a lot of times I’ll stop in the school that I’m assigned so I’ll try and stop and talk to the kids or the teacher or parents there. Just try to be available and be in the areas that the community has called and requested extra assistance with and then I do a lot of secondary assignments or extra details to try to—like I’m our Special Olympics coordinator and I’m on a lot of separate assignments which I guess keeps me busy, doing some that stuff.” Officer 72 also noted that this community interaction can help establish the officer on their beat as a positive presence saying, “Like [department store name], I know the employees like to take a smoke break outside, three, four, maybe five times a night, so they see me, I’m visible. Or like the gas stations, those clerks work by themselves so they like seeing a cop car going through the lot every once in a while, knowing were out there and available. And I know most of them, some on a first name basis ‘cause I been working the same area for so long.”

Some officers note community interaction is not just about leaving a positive impression in the public’s mind but positive contacts can be for the purpose of gathering and sharing information. Officers drove through their residential neighborhoods making positive contact with citizens who might be out, gathering information from them. Officer 42 explained, “If you’re out and about and see someone, whether you think they might be involved in something and you

don't know, you don't even really just stop them but you get out and talk to them, see if you can get somewhere with them. Even talking with citizens, if they see things that are out of the ordinary, things that might be suspicious to them.”

Officers will attempt to stop at a business or other public location, such as a park or mall, commonly referred to by officers as a COP stop<sup>6</sup>, to make contact with employees or citizens for information, and to keep them informed of crime in their neighborhoods. Officer 24 said, “Check commercial areas, parking lots, try to make contact with people who are out and about whether they're doing something wrong or not, just to find out what's goin' on, make those community contacts, let people know what's goin' on in their neighborhoods, if they've had a lotta thefts, burglaries.” With a similar focus, Officer 58 saw the benefit of making COP stops,<sup>7</sup> “...I stop at a lot of the convenience stores in my areas and visit with the staff, say hello to people coming and going. They got regular people going to the store, visit with them... I've gotten to know those people and that's helped me 'cause I've had people approach me with information and I think I'm pretty well received if I have to deal with people 'cause I've met so many of them. So I try and stop out, if I see them walking it's as simple as rolling down the window, asking how the day's going.”

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<sup>6</sup> While the COP acronym typically refers to Community Oriented Policing, here the officers' use of these initials (pronounced See-O-Pee) referred to a range of activities that could include visiting with employees at local businesses, checking parks, stopping to chat with members of the public, stopping at a school on their beat, visiting a lemonade stand, or other activities where officers engaged members of the public for public relations purposes.

<sup>7</sup> Officers were expected to perform COPs and may at times be required to show evidence that they engaged in them. I observed some officers logging their COP stops on a log sheet but the majority of officers would simply call out [radio] their COP activity to dispatch so that a record was generated of their activity.

Recalling that crime prevention was considered a major purpose of patrol, 22% of officers mentioned engaging in the patrolling of areas that were referred to as hot spots, problem areas, or areas of high calls for service. Officers viewed this as a logical approach. If officers are trying to prevent crime, they should be patrolling where the crime is occurring or about to occur. Officers are aware of their problem areas on their beats and try to focus on the offenses that may be occurring. Officer 55 said, "...the biggest thing is to get out in the areas and I try and focus mostly on the known problem areas, whether its drug sales or prostitution problems at the motels or if it's just unlawful entries into motor vehicles where people are stealing cigarette butts or whatever that might be."

For the individual officers, where they end up patrolling varied by the characteristics of their beats and the problem areas. For example, Officer 29 had a residential focus, "I tend to focus on areas that we are having problems, whether it be burglaries, any complaints that are repetitive, that you see a trend with, maybe. So I'll hit [to patrol or cover] that area, get out on foot, walk through that area, through back yards, ya know, looking to see if anybody is going door to door. That's a lot of times what we have when we have garage break-ins and burglaries and stuff, these guys are just looking for unlocked doors, going through these unlocked doors. Just actively out looking for the problem that might be there." Other officers focused on industrial areas. For example, this officer said,

I will drive through some of my larger construction sites, usually after bar close, especially if I'm not doing something and those are the times when we see more activities through calls for service. We get calls for suspicious vehicles and those are the times, after two [a.m.], when we have more activity in our construction areas. I'll get in there, turn on my lights, check a door here and there. One area that's booming is Z street which turns into Antelope Drive, Y, X avenues, there's just a ton of new homes being built [there]. Some of the builders—if I was a thief and wanted to build something, that's where I would go because there's just a ton of material out there.

Just as many officers (22%) utilized effective traffic enforcement to serve crime prevention, deterrence, and traffic enforcement purposes. Officers typically described effective traffic enforcement as enforcement that makes a difference in public safety such as maintaining visibility in high traffic areas to act as a deterrent for speeding and raise awareness of drivers to a police presence in these areas. Officers can utilize directives or intelligence to focus their effort. Officer 34 noted, “Well, we have programs where we can see where there's crashes and things going on so I'll go to the areas that are more problematic for us and enforce those areas. The things on our radar, you can say, where we're getting a lot of citations, a lot of crashes, even our sergeants will send us emails ‘Hey can you guys watch this area, we're having problems with this there’ or whatever.” This officer provided a more detailed explanation of what he felt effective traffic enforcement was,

I guess, for example, when I run traffic, I want it to be in an area where it will have an impact. For example, there's places where you could sit like the 12th avenue viaduct, the big bridge. You could sit up there and get speeders all day long, there's no doubt about that. But that's an area, in my mind, that the pedestrian walkway is concreted and there's concrete walls on both sides, nobody's crossing the street up there and the flow is pretty good, there's no stop and go traffic there. So for me to just sit up there and write tickets for speeders, I don't see a huge value in that, personally. I would rather sit in an area, a residential area, where you have kids crossing the street or an apartment complex where kids are playing, like crossing the street to the park or to another complex. I would rather spend my time doing that where I may not get a ticket. I could sit there all day and not get a ticket, but at least I'm in that area where if I do stop a speeder or the public sees me sitting there, they're thinking I gotta slow down at least here...

With a visible officer presence in problem areas, ideally the public will have an awareness of officer presence, which will then heighten their awareness of their own driving behavior, attentiveness, and of traffic situations, and thus possibly stop or deter problematic behavior. For example, Officer 29 said, “We have problem areas for traffic. You start hitting that real hard, a presence there for people that are regularly in that area and know this is bad place to speed through.”

Similarly, some officers (15%) also try to maintain high visibility around their beat as a general deterrence factor which served the patrol purpose of deterrence. Showing the public there is a police presence and that officers are “out and about” [a term officers used to describe being out in public and active] may convince potential criminals and delinquents that the certainty of detection has increased and influence them to leave the area or put off law violating behavior. One officer said, “Well obviously it’s make us more visible so people—like working this shift, we get a lot of the people once it gets dark out, trying to get into garages, that kind of stuff, so by making ourselves visible and driving down those residential streets and doing traffic stops and its—ultimately it’s going to send them to a different area of town [the officer believed] and if we’re doing it over all the areas of town it’ll make it harder for them to get away with doing anything.” Officers particularly noticed the deterrent effect in traffic. For example, Officer 56 said, “Try to be seen on the main roads, especially now, rush hour, is when you're gonna get most of your traffic violations. People, I'm sure you noticed, this thing sticks out like a sore thumb, it’s like a little bubble and people drive perfect around you, so if I can affect people's driving like that and they drive safer, especially around rush hour, it’s good. Limit the accidents and traffic violations as much as I can.” Officers would also patrol areas of their beat looking for prowlers. Officer 43 said, “I'd probably say just being in the high crime areas. If you know that there's people out there looking at these construction zones or whatever you wanna call them, casing them out, being in the area probably deters them.” Other officers, like Officer 67, showed a presence in areas of high activity on their beats, “I'll run through [a local bar], that’s the biggest thing for nights, trying to deter drunk driving so you go through the parking lots of liquor establishments.”

**Serving the purposes of patrol by type of officer.** There were indications that the type of officer accounted for variation in how officers serve the purposes of patrol. Considering the four main ways officers serve the purposes of patrol, community interaction, problem area patrolling, effective traffic enforcement, and maintaining visibility for deterrence, among the descriptive categories many of the groups exhibited a relatively equal mix of means to serve the purposes but some of the descriptive categories referenced some of these means more or less prominently than others (Figure 2). District 1 officers tended to engage in more community interaction than in other means while District 3 officers made almost no mention of effective traffic enforcement as a means to serve the purposes of patrol. By level of experience, novice officers related a relatively equal mix of the means they utilized but experienced and established officers only made rare mention of establishing high visibility for general deterrence. For veteran officers, their focus on serving the purposes of patrol lay in community interaction. Shift differences were present as well. Day shift officers had a strong focus on utilizing community interaction while the night shift made hardly any mention of deterrence by visibility. With community interaction being one of the stronger focuses, both the district and shift may allow for more community interaction. District 1 has large areas of residential neighborhoods and the day shift allowed officers more opportunity to interact with what one officer referred to as “normal people”, the average citizen and neighborhood resident who is out and about.

In summary, officers view serving the three main purposes of patrol; community visibility, crime prevention, and deterrence (and to a lesser degree, traffic enforcement, availability, and public safety as primarily a mixture of interacting with the public, patrolling problem areas, working traffic, and using their visibility to act as a deterrent. However different types of officers may put a greater focus on some means over others in serving patrol purposes.

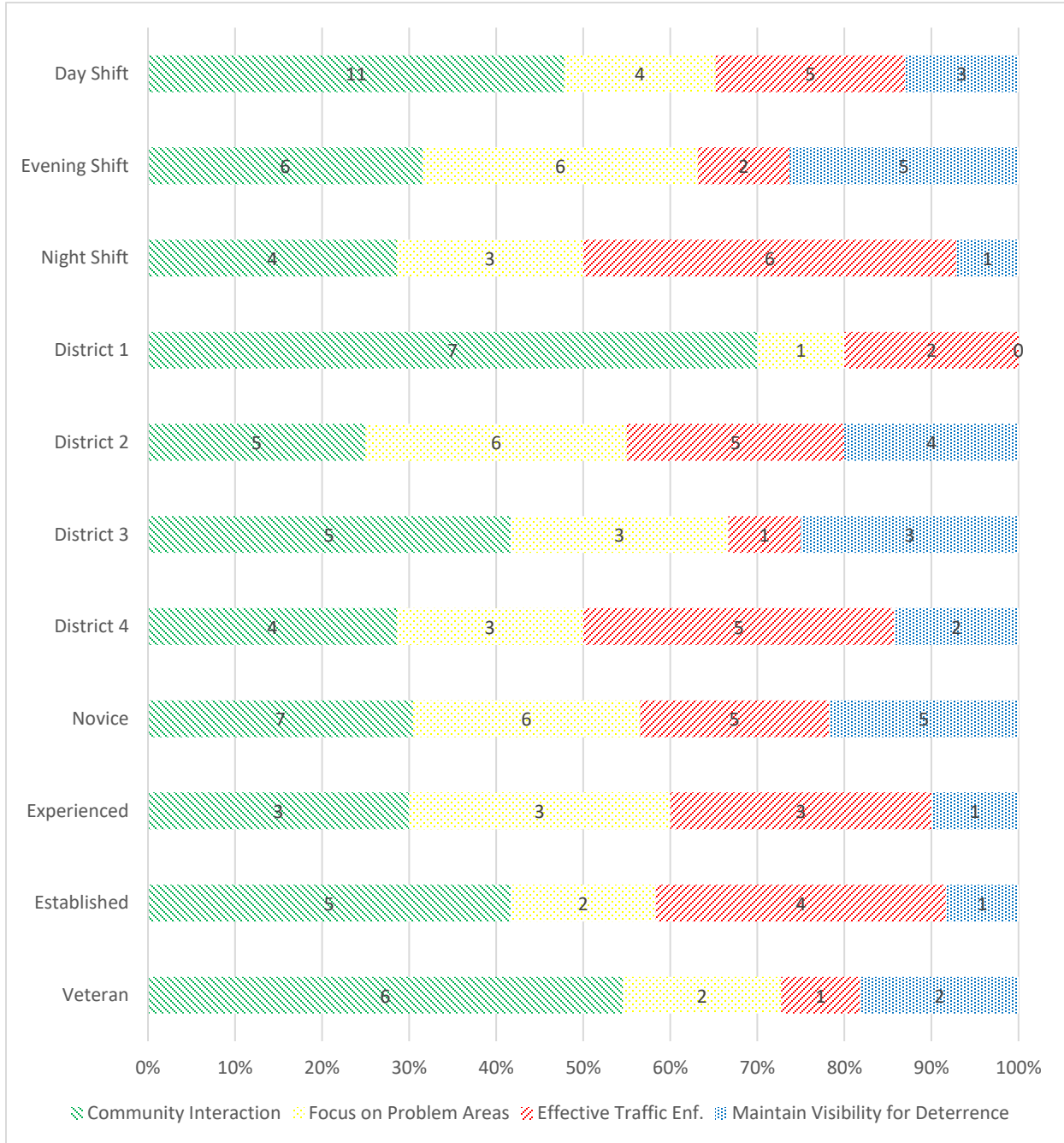


Figure 2. Percentage of officers referencing means of serving patrol purposes by beat, district, and experience



These purposes of patrol may help identify officers' policing role or style. Wilson (1968) saw the police as functioning in a legalistic, watchman, or service organizational style. These styles focus on law enforcement and its arrest function, informal means of enforcement often in the context of order maintenance, and service to the public, respectively. These terms were meant to define police departments' overall philosophy on police work within their community.

However, attempting to definitively characterize officers with one style or another is problematic as each officer may react differently to a different situation. The current study's examination of officers' views on the purpose of patrol can provide some insight into officers' policing orientation and style.

Considering the purposes of patrol, the officers in the current study had a strong focus on the legalistic style by identifying deterrence, crime prevention, and traffic enforcement as purposes of patrol, though with a few officers questioning the effectiveness of deterrence in some contexts. Yet, officers identified with a service role as well; community visibility and public assistance are also important purposes of patrol, though not to the degree of responses focusing on law enforcement as the purpose. With officers' strong focus on law enforcement purposes, they frequently mentioned patrolling high crime areas, however community interaction was the most often referenced means of serving the purposes of patrol.

A greater number of references to community interaction were also associated with certain officer descriptive categories and may be indicative of a policing style orientation. Day shift officers, officers in District One, and more experienced officers (established and veteran officers) more frequently referenced utilizing community interaction to serve the purpose of patrol. This identification with a service role may come about because of the characteristics associated with these officers and the district.

Based on my observations and subsequent data, officers with more seniority, which allowed preferential shift assignment, tended to choose day shift assignments. The day shift had a lower level of call volume, compared to the evening and night shift, which allowed day officers more time to engage in community interaction. The day shift also allowed officers more casual contact with the community, both in the neighborhoods and business districts. It may also be true that the more experienced officers are less concerned about establishing themselves as a law enforcement officer by focusing on a legalistic orientation and are more comfortable with the inevitable service role that officers must engage in within the community.

District 1 in the study setting also had characteristics that were conducive to community interaction. District 1, with its older, quieter neighborhoods, had fewer calls for service than other districts and these neighborhoods provide opportunities for officers to chat with residents and visit some of the many schools on the beats. This is in contrast to other districts which contained expansive retail areas, higher crime locations, heavy traffic areas, large areas of apartment housing, or newer housing development areas on the outskirts of the beat, which may not be as conducive to developing a sense of community between residents and amongst residents and officers.

### **Officers' Goals for Patrol**

While officers identified the purposes of patrol and how they serve them, they also provided insight into whether they try to achieve any personal goals generated from their patrol time on their shift. The goals officers have, defined as the things they like to see themselves accomplish by the end of the day, will likely influence the manner in which they patrol as they attempt to accomplish those goals and thus influence how they manage their area of responsibility. There was a wide variation in specific goals that officers had with even a few

officers (8%) noting that they did not try to achieve any personal goals during the shift. The fluid nature of patrol and high call volume inhibited them from setting a goal that they might not be able to reach, and they avoided the resulting frustration that would have accompanied not achieving that goal.

While the goals varied widely, they could be more easily accounted for when categorized into four main themes: *beat management*, *enforcement actions*, *community-oriented*, and *personal*. Beat management goals were referenced by 36% of officers and while they varied widely they typically entailed being able to effectively and efficiently manage their work environment and conditions in some manner. Officer 33 explained, “Absolutely, I mean it’s—this is a huge time management beat so the first thing is keeping my head above water. If I get too far down, I’m not really gonna be of a help to anybody ‘cause I’m just gonna be stuck in the station doing reports so time management is kinda number one.” Being able to manage their call volume was also a goal expressed by officers under this theme. Officer 41 said, “Just take my calls, cover my beat, and make sure nobody else is in my area taking up my slack.” Officer 39 reiterated the importance of being able to handle the calls received, “You know covering calls on my beat so other officers don’t have to take those calls for me, whether—I just don’t like it when an officer has to take a call on my beat because I’m caught up with another call so I like to handle my calls and do them efficiently.” Under this theme a few other officers expressed other goals such as obtaining good beat coverage, showing a presence in problem areas, and acting as a deterrent as ways that achieved or assisted in beat management.

Thirty-four percent of officers referenced holding personal-related goals; these typically involved a direct benefit to the officer such as completing the day’s work without any carryover to the next day, becoming a better officer, and coming home safe. Across the four goal themes,

the most frequently cited individual goal for officers was to come home safe (19%). Some officers, like Officer 60, felt this goal extended to everyone in uniform, “Come home every night, honestly that’s my main goal. Everybody that wears my uniform comes home safe, that’s my goal.” Pertinent to the socially current discussion of officers’ use of force in encounters with subjects, another officer also expressed the sentiment that coming home safe may even occur at the expense of the subject<sup>8</sup>, “But my big thing is I’m going home every night to see my family and every officer I work with or that I’m on a call with, they’re also gonna go home. And if we have to go hands on with somebody to do it, so be it. Our administration can figure out if I was right or wrong in my use of force, as long as what I’m doing is legal, I’m gonna do what I need to do to stay safe. So just having that mentality, it’s my safety first, then subject safety.”

Twenty-nine percent of officers referenced community-related goals which typically involved making community contacts and providing assistance. These officers wanted to make some kind of positive difference, if even in just a small way, with the public or community. Officer 61 explained, “I got into this line of work to help people so I like to think every day I can come in and help somebody, that’s (inaudible) try to make a difference, at least some small difference. It doesn’t happen every day ‘cause I don’t always get those opportunities but that’s what I’m looking for, the opportunity to help somebody, even if in a minor way.” Officer 54, mirrored a similar, but more pragmatic, sentiment:

So you always ask new police officers, why do you wanna be a police officer? ‘Cause I really wanna help people, I wanna make a difference is what everybody says and most people, including myself, think that. But I’m not naive enough to think I make a huge difference, I don’t really think I make a lot of difference. I’ll maybe make a big difference

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<sup>8</sup> The use of subject within this study and by officers refers to any individual who becomes the subject of the officer’s focus. It is a broader definition than suspect or criminal, as while a subject might eventually be arrested, they might also simply be a field contact or a person the officer is investigating on a dispatch call or self-initiated stop.

for a short period of time if I go break up a domestic and arrest someone, help someone, direct them toward services. So I don't know I make a huge difference very often but I do come each day, I wanna try and at least help someone if I can, even a little bit, even if it's not very big. And it could be as simple as going to a Kool-Aid stand, or someone lost in town, rather than tell them where to go maybe I just tell them to follow me where they wanna go, simple things like that. I do try and set a goal of at least something to help someone a little bit.

Officers identified different ways they would try to be of an assistance to the community including trying to make a positive community contact, helping a member of the public, trying to make someone feel safe, hitting all the COPs or businesses on their beat, or establish visibility in the community, in an attempt to have a positive influence. Officer 26 said, "I would like to see that by the end of the day that we've done more good than what it was before. People, just by driving past their house or seeing something that's out of place, and we can hopefully prevent something that might harm somebody or damage their property."

Enforcement action goals often centered on completing or accomplishing typical patrol officer duties and were referenced by 27% of officers. One of the more frequently mentioned activities under this theme involved writing one to two cites [traffic citations] a day. This goal should be viewed in the context of the study police department having a performance standard (which some officers referred to as a quota) of 20 to 25 traffic citations a month per officer. For example, one officer said, "My mindset is, I don't do anything until I get two tickets, so that's what I focus on, my whole day is focusing on getting two tickets. And if I get those two tickets, then I'll try and do some of the stuff that I'd rather be doing and what I think is more important." For some officers with this goal, effective traffic enforcement is still a consideration. Officer 40 stated, "As far as traffic stops my goal would be two citations that are quality citations whether its red lights or whether it's not stopping for pedestrians, especially in this area, something that's important. I don't count taillights out or things like that. Things that impact

people. I know we get tons of complaints on red light violators so that's something I'll pay attention to, stop sign violations, anything dealing with other traffic or pedestrians will count as a quality citation. And that's just a personal goal not an expectation from the department or anything like that.”

Accomplishing certain common officer activities could also serve as goals. Some officers sought to serve warrants and make arrests and for some officers, like Officer 70, finding DUIs was goal, “But as far as a work goal, it's gonna sound simple or rudimentary, but finding a drunk driver. It's kind of a game of what-ifs that we play. Most impaired drivers get to where they're going without doing something wrong, a car crash, they don't hurt anybody. But at the same time there's always that what-if. A rabbit runs out in front of a vehicle and somebody tries to avoid it, maybe they hit a vehicle, maybe a pedestrian, whatever. If I can catch that individual and potentially prevent somebody, even the impaired driver, from getting hurt, then I've done my job.” Other officers, like Officer 59, held goals related to limiting drug activity, “Also I try and make it a goal to find some sort of drugs once a day, but it seems the harder you look, the harder it is to find. And drugs is kinda something you fall into, at least for me anyways. It kinda goes in streaks, but if I can get some sort of drugs out of the area it's a pretty good day for me.”

### **Goals by Type of Officer**

Overall, officers tended to reference somewhat more beat management-related goals compared to other types of goals, though all the goal themes were mentioned with some frequency. Some of these goals carried more weight for some officers than others. Within the experience category, compared to other officers, established officers held more beat management goals. Within district and shift, the only real standout in regard to goals were among districts.

District 3 officers barely mentioned enforcement actions as a goal for patrol. No other subgroup patterns emerged.

In summary, while officers have a variety of goals, they fall under four themes; beat management, community, enforcement, and personal Central to how officers manage their area of responsibility, the most frequently mentioned goals fell under the beat management theme, which was the effective and efficient management of their work environment, tasks, and activities. It would not be unusual for this goal theme to be present in other employment fields but officer goals were more specific to the law enforcement field.

As with the purposes of patrol, officers' goals could help define their policing style (Wilson, 1968). Community-related goals suggest a focus on a service role; being available to the community and interacting in a positive way by providing information, assurances, and a friendly presence on the beat helps foster the positive relationship with the public that a service role should provide. When officers hold enforcement-related goals such as serving warrants, obtaining traffic citations, or making DUI stops it suggests a focus on a legalistic role. Officers' personal-related goals do not focus on their policing style or role but rather focus on their perceptions of professionalism and on-the-job risks in their goals of betterment and self-preservation of the officer. In examining goals that impact the community (enforcement and community related), there were slightly more community related goals expressed compared to enforcement goals. Based on their goals, no dominant role orientation with the officers was identified nor was any policing style associated with specific officer descriptive categories.

## Feelings and Preferences Toward Patrolling

### Feelings about Patrolling

To help understand how officers approached patrol work on their beat I wanted to explore the mindset that officers had regarding patrolling. If officers viewed patrolling positively or as something enjoyable, officers may be more enthusiastic about engaging in the work and take a greater interest in focused or proactive patrolling. If officers had negative feelings about the act of patrolling, they may be less likely to be engaged in patrolling, treating it like something they must do rather than something they want to do. The vast majority of officers (90%), when asked how they felt about the act of patrolling, said they enjoyed it or loved it with feelings similar to those expressed by Officer 30, “I love it! I know that things can change but I've always said I don't want to be an investigator, I wanna be out on the street doing this. I don't wanna be reading reports and doing all of the follow-up, being at a desk. I like being out and about in the community.” Officer 70 also spoke about enjoying patrol and expressed a preference for patrol over answering calls, “I actually love it. Because I do love traffic enforcement this is obviously the—I love to drive in general, it's just one of those things, I enjoy it, just driving. So I actually think that taking calls for service is actually that filler time—for me this is my primary job. Taking calls for service is when it detracts from my ability to come out and patrol, so I would rather do patrol all night long, maybe take a few calls here and there. But on really busy nights where I'm just taking calls for service and I don't get a chance to patrol, those are the nights I don't feel like I did anything.”

Though almost all officers enjoyed the patrolling aspect of their work, a number of officers (24%) related as well that patrolling can sometimes be unenjoyable and boring. Officer 19 said, “I enjoy it a lot, it can be very rewarding at times, just talking to people, running into



people, talking to business owners or employees and what not. At other times, it feels like there's nothing going on and you're driving in circles trying to find stuff on some days." Another officer also mentioned how the beat can affect the level of boredom, "Some nights it can be a lot of fun, just depending on what kind of calls are happening while you're patrolling around. Specifically, on this beat, what I dislike about it is it's such a big area, a lot of driving around, long stretches of road, so it kinda gets old and tiring."

A few officers (8%) expressed ambivalence about patrolling, considering it just part of the job. One officer said, "I don't know that I would necessarily say I enjoy it, it's something that's part of our job." Another officer said, "I don't like getting in the car and driving around. I don't like it."

I also asked officers who stated they enjoyed patrolling, what they specifically liked about the act of patrolling. Officers most frequently referenced themes of *freedom*, *autonomy*, *variety*, and *proactivity*. The most frequently mentioned aspect by officers (36%) was the freedom of just being "out and about" and not stuck behind a desk; having that ability to be able to drive around the city and be outside. Officer 43 explained, "Oh yeah, I like it. I like patrolling. I enjoy being out and about, driving around. Ya know, I don't always write cites. A lot of it is just talking to people, giving them warnings, explain to them what they're doing wrong, equipment violations, explain that to them... of all the jobs I've had in my life, construction, desk jobs...there's nothing like being out and about driving, for me, driving around, being outside, not stuck in an office." Other officers expressed a similar feeling. For example, this officer said "I don't mind it all because I'm kinda of the—I don't like just sitting there doing nothing. I like to be active and moving around that's why I put so many miles on my squad car every shift."

Twenty-five percent of the officers that enjoyed patrol also said they enjoyed the autonomy that patrol offered. It gave officers the ability to involve themselves in whatever activity they were in a mood for; doing traffic, running warrants, doing COPs, or making neighborhood contacts, for example. Officer 15 said, "I enjoy it, just being my own boss, being able to drive where I want. You have to understand I just got off the program not that long ago so I wasn't able to do that, it was dictated, but now I can." A similar feeling was expressed by Officer 38, "I kinda like patrolling better than going to some of my calls I take just 'cause it gives me the freedom to do what I wanna do. I'm not stuck going to take a report for some theft or something because somebody left their doors unlocked or lent their friend something and their friend didn't give it back and now they want something done about it, that kind of thing." However, some officers recognized that call volume placed limits on their autonomy, like Officer 64, "I enjoy it 'cause I like the freedom of it, kinda just look for the problems myself, decide what I'm gonna focus my attentions on. It's kinda fun to see if you can make a difference on something. And it does, it fills up the few gaps between calls on this shift. We don't have a lot of downtime but I like to stay busy so when I'm not taking calls I like to be proactive." Officer 58 also mentioned it was sometimes difficult to engage in what officers wanted to do when faced with call volume on the evening shift. "I like that more, sometimes, than going to calls 'cause you can direct that yourself. I know just after the experience of working here, and the calls I've taken, and even from the street crimes unit and all the help that they give us and directing us, who are the key people causing gang issues or violence issues, vandalisms, things like that. I like that I can go do that and just self-initiate things, which is nice, but it's tough to do that on this shift which-sometimes it's frustrating ya know when all you do is take calls."

Twenty-three percent of officers who said they enjoyed patrolling stated one of the reasons were the variety of things that would happen on their shift; from the members of the public they would meet to the different situations that would arise. Every day was different and officers did not know what they would encounter. Officer 25 said, "...I really enjoy patrol, it's just the characters, the people that you meet—it blows my mind sometimes. I love watching movies, reading books, stories; you read about people and you're like they can't exist in real life and with this job, these characters, they do. You get to meet all kinds of different people, it just really expands your knowledge of the world in general and I really enjoy that part of the job. I love patrol now." I noted this as well, having encountered a number of situations and incidents that ranged from comically absurd to tragic, from mind numbing interactions with subjects to explosively violent encounters. It became clear the initial nature of the call from dispatch or officer initiated contact does not always give a clear indication what the end result of the encounter will be. Officer 45 said, "I like it. It's just something new every day and that part's fun. Like yesterday, I'm going to an unwanted male and it turns out to be a male trying to pick up a 7-year-old prostitute—didn't see that coming when I got the run. I walk up to him and he's sitting right in front of me and she says that's him right there...that's patrol, you don't know what the day is going to bring you and that's why I don't like to plan it out. I don't like to plan out I'm gonna do a bunch of traffic today or get DUIs. I'm gonna let the day bring itself to me."

Other officers (21%) enjoyed the proactive nature of patrolling. They did not have to always wait for a call, simply being reactive, but they could "make their own calls" by focusing on problem areas and perhaps heading off problems before they grow. Officer 69 stated, "I love it. To me there's two types of cops, report takers and report makers and I would rather go out and find stuff and generate my own reports rather than just going call to call. To me that's more

interesting. I like to, if I can, if it's a little slower, like today hasn't been crazy, I like to create my own workload." Officer 35 explained further,

I really like being a patrol officer, if I had my way I'd make a career out of being a patrol officer. I like working the streets, I think we have the most immediate impact on our community. We can—investigations can put some good cases together, put some big cases together, but it takes 'em time to do that. A guy may commit the same thing four, five times before they get a case together on something. I like the immediate gratification where if I catch you doing something I can stop you now and I can take you to jail. That impact is right now, that's satisfying to me on patrol. I like patrol, I like moving around, being out on the street.

Some officers, like Officer 39, also recognized their ability to be proactive was limited by call volume, "I actually enjoy it very much. I wish we actually had more time to do it some days 'cause some days, like today, as you've seen, its call to call and you're busy taking calls so you can't get that patrol where you self-initiate some things, like traffic stops, getting some drugs, stopping those suspicious people that are walking in areas. That's fun to me, self-initiated stuff."

Finally, 17% of officers who enjoyed patrol said they liked that it allowed them to positively interact with the public. It is interesting to note that while analysis up to this point has demonstrated community oriented aspects play an important part in defining purposes and goals, other aspects of patrolling are what officers tend to find somewhat more enjoyable. The more prominent themes associated with officers' enjoyment of patrol; freedom, autonomy, and variety all share a dynamic nature about them. Officers are on their own, motivated, and free to make decisions in an ever-changing environment and it is this fluid nature of the workplace setting that feeds officer enjoyment of patrol.

**Feelings about patrol within the context of calls for service.** To further gauge officers' orientation toward patrol, I asked officers the question; Given the understanding that answering dispatch calls is part of the job, did they think dispatch calls for service more often interrupted effective patrolling or more often broke up the monotony of patrolling. While officers are

expected to logistically manage dispatch calls on their beat, how officers felt about balancing the reactive call-taking with proactive patrolling is also of interest. Officers' views as to the importance and relevancy of patrol could relate to how they view dispatch and their beat, and thus how they manage their beat. Feelings that patrolling is interrupted by dispatch may suggest a primacy associated with patrolling and a desire to actively engage in patrolling. It may also suggest a frustration with dispatch and the members of the public that are generating the disruptive calls. Interruptions to patrolling may be seen as hampering or taking away from the important work of patrol and may thus affect how officers view and manage their calls, and the people on their beat. A reduced time to patrol may push officers to only cover the most important or volatile parts of the beat, leaving portions uncovered, as they attempt to exercise effective and efficient patrolling.

Enjoying a break from the monotony of patrol may also suggest attitudes influential to an officer's beat management. Wanting a relief from the monotony of patrol may suggest a desire for more action and variety that comes from dispatch calls, and less engagement with the patrolling process. While complaining about the lack of dispatch calls in the late evening, one officer I accompanied, ignored, or appeared to be oblivious to, opportunities for field contacts and investigations that presented themselves.<sup>9</sup> Feelings of monotony or boredom may also stem from having the time to cover the beat extensively. Officers who feel bored may also feel they have done what they can do with their beat and covered everything that needed to be covered. They may have had the time and opportunity to make COP stops, field contacts, and engage in

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<sup>9</sup> Though noting the unusualness of a family of four, with small children, walking down the sidewalk of a busy street, in the early morning hours, carrying bags of their belongings, the officer chose not to make a field contact. After I pointed out an open side-door of a garage in a residential neighborhood at 3:00 AM, the officer circled back around, confirmed it looked open, and continued on his patrolling.

investigation and look forward to dispatch calls to break up any redundancy in their patrol activities.

Responses to the question indicated this was not simply an either/or issue. Twenty-seven percent of the officers felt that dispatch interrupted their patrol efforts with some officers noting that while it was an interruption, calls for service are important too. Thirty-five percent felt that dispatch broke up the monotony of patrol with some officers noting that it was nice to be able to be proactive as well. Another 24% felt that dispatch at times interrupted both their patrolling efforts and the monotony of patrol. The rest of the officers (14%) felt dispatch did neither. Instead they saw dispatch calls as primary and that patrolling is only secondary in their jobs.

***Feelings about patrol within the context of calls for service by type of officer.***

Examining the different officer categories on this issue, the only instances where one view appeared more prevalent was that the evening shift tended to say that dispatch interrupted their patrolling efforts and the night shift tended to say that dispatch calls broke up the monotony of patrol. This may be a function of call volume. A higher call volume on the evening shift will more likely interrupt officers self-initiated activities, while the lower call volume on the night shift may leave officers wanting calls for service to alleviate the monotony and routine of frequent patrolling which results from a lower call volume and decreased community activity that occurs with the night shift.

**Patrol Preferences**

During the interviews, 24 officers (41%) expressed a preference for focusing on or participating, or not participating, in certain commonplace patrol duties. With the autonomy that officers experience and enjoy on patrol, to the degree allowable by departmental expectations, that autonomy may influence, and be expressed in the activities they engage in on their beat.

While a few of these officers expressed a disinterest in some activities like hunting DUIs or expressed interest in finding narcotics or running warrants, the preferences that stood out included running traffic and making community contacts. However, twice as many officers stated they preferred not to run traffic compared to those who stated they had a preference for it. This view was typically expressed in connection with preferring some other activity. Some officers, like Officer 25, preferred running warrants, “One of the things I really like doing is searching for warrants, people who have warrants, I like to hunt people down, for lack of a better word. That's my thing. Some people do traffic stops, I'd much rather take people to jail than write a ticket.” Other officers like Officer 55 preferred gathering intel, “Traffic isn't one of my biggest passions. My big thing is as a patrol officer, if I have more time, is to work informants or work other issues in my beat and find out what's going on in my beat, by getting out and talking to people, whether they're good, bad, or indifferent, everybody has something to tell us.” Other officers expressed preferences ranging from catching prowlers, to dealing with the homeless, to focusing on and investigating serious crimes over working traffic enforcement.

### **Officers' Approach to Patrol Work**

Officers were asked if they had any particular approach to patrol. That is, did they hold any views or characterizations about the nature of patrol work or how it should be done? Most officers did not express that they had any particular philosophy, orientation, or style regarding patrol, as described by Wilson (1968), but some did provide some generalizations related to working patrol. Some of these generalizations included avoiding complacency when answering calls; the importance of beat knowledge; making use of observation skills and experience; keeping good notes; helping out the district by “jumping calls” (a term used to describe officers informing dispatch that they will take a call assigned to another officer in order to help that other

officer out); the importance of investigation over assumption; handling calls efficiently and thoroughly.

Some officers said they tried to establish a balance between law enforcement, traffic enforcement, neighborhood visibility, and crime prevention. One officer looked at this way, “My philosophy is a Mayberry RFD<sup>10</sup> kind of a cop. I'm not big enough to be mean to people all the time so I gotta kind of be nice. So I've always taken the philosophy of just trying to be nice to people, try to leave people a good taste, because there's—we got cops who get complained on all the time, I mean, and they certainly have attributes that make them good cops but they just don't—I took the job to be nice to people first, then if you gotta be mean, you can be. So I kind of—and the part of town I patrol is that small town atmosphere.” As noted by the officer above, some officers expressed a desire to serve the people on the beat as well as engage in law enforcement, like Officer 53 who said, “I live out in this district so I like seeing cops coming down my street when I'm not working and so do my neighbors. A lot of people are working but a lot of people are staying home with families in the summer time. And again, that's who I'm trying to serve, the good people, not trying to put all my services into the bad people. So I guess, since you ask, I try to hit the residential neighborhoods quite a bit.”

Some officers focused more on law enforcement activities than service. This officer strove to provide a mix of law enforcement, “I try to make a good mix of doing traffic and crime prevention as far as property crime, making sure the college kids are in line. Not just doing residential versus commercial, trying to do a good mix of everything 'cause obviously crime doesn't have a set time schedule, they occur whenever they want to. So if I do one thing at one

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<sup>10</sup> Referencing a TV portrayal of a fictional town overseen by a kindly sheriff.



time and another thing at a certain time I might have the potential to miss prowlers and vandals so I just try to mix it up as much as I can without being predictable.”

### **Being a Good Patrol Officer**

The expectation about how a beat should be managed is also reflected in the question about what it takes to be a good patrol officer. Officers were asked how they felt about and viewed patrol and now they were given an opportunity to address what kind of person or officer is best suited for patrol work, in a broader sense. This question asks officers, in a sense, who best could effectively manage a beat and the responsibilities of a patrol officer. Officers were given an opportunity to discuss what makes a good patrol officer; the personality traits, attitudes, and beliefs to have and the things that officers should try to engage in, hone, and develop, all in an attempt to become a good patrol officer and engage in good patrol work.

As might be anticipated, officers identified a wide range of responses but ten qualities and traits stood out based on the frequency of responses: communication skills, self-motivation, beat knowledge, patience, public interaction, a team player, observation skills, common sense, fairness and consistency in interactions, and understanding and compassion with the public. Some of the traits received previous, and future, mention in the context of other interview questions and their reemergence here helps reinforce the importance in which officers’ view some of these qualities and traits.

The most frequently referenced quality that officers mentioned (47%) was having good communication skills. Good communication skills were seen as an asset and useful in a number of circumstances. Officer 19 mentioned using communication for putting people at ease and getting them to open up to an officer, “Communication is big, I always tell people if you have somebody who committed a crime, talking to them like they're in trouble is not going to get you

anywhere, or like they're in trouble and they're goin' to jail. You want to be able to communicate with someone without coming off as a stone wall cop, 'cause you're not going to get any information that way. If somebody gets a sense that you've come to the conclusion that they're a criminal, then that's it." Another officer also saw these skills useful in being able to communicate effectively with different kinds of people, "... you need to learn to talk to people, and all kinds of people. You need to learn to—you can't just go with someone who thinks he's a big tough gangbanger and talk to him all nice, 'cause they don't respect that. Sometimes you have to talk up to them how they're talkin' to you, but then again you have to have compassion. You can't be yelling, raising your voice at Joe Schmo citizen that's asking a question 'cause that's where people get pissed off and jaded."

Value was also found in using communication to be able to de-escalate situations. Officer 66 said, "I've probably been in less than ten fights and it's always 'Well geez, it's your size, nobody wants to fight with you', which is wrong. Usually the fights that I got into were because of my size and it's happened several times, where it's 'If I got through you, the rest of the guys would be a breeze'. So it's not necessarily my size, I like to think it's my brains kicking in before my tongue or my muscles. Which we got a lot of good officers on the street, they do that, they're talkers before they're fighters, I don't wanna make it sound like we have a bunch of cowboys out here. It [communication skills] makes it a lot easier."

Officers also found having strong communication skills helped provide positive community contacts, like Officer 40 who said, "The biggest thing I try to teach is communication skills and how you come across to people. 'Cause a lot of time new officers are either really excited and maybe have something to prove and so they come across pretty stiff with the community but yet that looks good to the department. If you stand firm, in the department they

think ‘Oh you're a great person’ but out here, community people deal with you and they're like ‘You're not—I can't communicate with you’.” Officer 43 mentioned how communication skills can make contact with problem people less confrontational,

Respect isn't given, it's earned, period. If you're gonna come out here and automatically think that this uniform automatically demands respect—it doesn't. I deal with people every day and that's where I come to the soft contact versus hard contact. You're gonna deal with the same people every day and if you think that you can show up ‘cause you got a uniform on, a badge, and can automatically say that they have to respect you, and you don't show them a little respect sometime during your patrol function—obviously when you show up to a call and shit's out of control, you're gonna have to get up there and demand respect. But if you want to be successful on your beat, and successful with the people you deal with, you're gonna have to turn around and throw them a little respect back, just to show them that.

Officer 60 also mentioned the importance of mastering communication skills and how difficulty in doing so can damage an officer's career, “The ability to talk to people is huge. If you get flustered on a simple call, you don't know what to say when people are yelling at you, the ability to change those gears to escalate and de-escalate the situation; there's times where you'll go to a call and you're gonna have to start swearing at people ‘cause that's the only way they'll understand. And once you get their attention and they realize you're serious, then ya gotta take that and go back down again, and some officers once they're up, can't get down. And that's a huge career killer, you're gonna get yourself in trouble.”

Two other qualities, each mentioned by approximately a quarter of the officers were self-motivation (24%) and good beat knowledge (23%). Officers typically tied self-motivation to being proactive on the beat. Officers sought to make their own work and not just wait for calls to be dispatched to them. Self-motivation was also seen as necessary when call volume was low as could happen on weekdays or on the night shift. Officers needed that self-motivation to keep active and resist complacency during periods of inactivity during their shift. For example, Officer 72 said, “Self-motivated, you gotta be self-motivated, you gotta keep pushing yourself to

do stuff 'cause the way you'll stay busy some nights is by finding your own work and that's one of the best things about this job is you determine how much work you're gonna do just by how proactive you are. If it's a slow traffic night, I'm sure there's people walking around to talk to.” Officer 30 noted that with the autonomy that officers have comes the need to be self-motivated, “You really have to be a self-starter. For the most part we're on our own, you do get some direction, but for the most part we're the ones who are out looking for the issues, we're the first contact people have and we have to make sure we're either finding them and getting the job done without someone looking over our shoulder constantly telling us what we need to do.”

Good beat knowledge was viewed as important in a few aspects. It is important for officers to be able to navigate around their beat effectively and efficiently. When officers are more familiar in navigating their beat, that is, knowing the shortcuts, roads to avoid, the quickest routes, and the out of the way places, they are more effective and efficient in their proactive patrolling, quicker in responding to calls, and they spend less time thinking about how to get to the call and more time thinking about the call itself prior to arriving. Also viewed as important in establishing good beat knowledge was knowing where to interact with ordinary citizens and knowing where the businesses and COP stops were so that officers can establish positive citizen contacts.

Part of good beat knowledge was also knowing where the problem people and areas were. Having that knowledge meant officers knew where to focus their patrol efforts and could aid officers in how they approach and react to areas and people. For example, one officer said, “Learn the area that you're patrolling and learn what kind of people live on your beat. Is it residential, is it college, and just learn the different areas and learn the different times and crimes that can pop up in those areas, especially like in a college area. Like I said before, so just

learning your beat, the demographics of the people you're dealing with would be helpful.”

Officer 23 echoed a similar sentiment as well as noting how their permanent assigned beats assist in developing beat knowledge, “...working the same beat which is extremely helpful, getting to know your beat, to get to know people on your beat, and places on your beat because it takes a lot of the legwork out of when you show up on a call, you kinda know—obviously there's constantly new people, new problems, stuff like that but if you can know kinda where you're going and what you typically deal with at that place, that helps. I'm assuming not all departments are able to work the areas the same way we do but that's helpful.”

Officers also frequently mentioned the quality of patience (15%), for example Officer 50 said, “The biggest single rule every cop needs to learn and it's the number one foundation rule for patrol, and every cop should know this, is that there's always tomorrow. If I don't catch you today, I'll catch you tomorrow. You don't need to fabricate anything, I don't need to make up anything, I don't need to make up some cheesy excuse ‘Oh your bumper height exceeds the limit’, you don't need to do any of that cheesy crap with traffic stops and I think the number one rule is patience is a virtue and if people are doing wrong things today ‘cause that's their nature, they'll be doing wrong things tomorrow.”

Some officers (15%), like Officer 32, mentioned the need to get out of the car and interact with the public, “Get out of the car and talk to people. Whether you're going into businesses just to talk to the clerk behind the counter, convenience store type things, whatever, get out of the car and talk to people. You gotta learn your neighborhood. Pay attention to people working out in their yards, I think those things all contribute to helping you identify the people who don't look like they belong in a particular neighborhood.” Being a team player was another quality mentioned by 14% of officers. For example, Officer 58 said, “Teamwork is another key

thing 'cause we all work together and that's stuff you don't even think about after a while but when you were saying we're all talking and communicating with each other, back and forth, about intelligence we have, it just becomes second nature. You have to be able to work with each other even if you don't necessarily always get along. You can't be the person who wants to make all the arrests, it's a team effort, otherwise it's not gonna work, we won't be as effective as law enforcement."

Another 12% of officers, like Officer 45, believed having good observation skills was a desirable patrol officer quality, "You gotta be attentive, things gotta stick out to you. If you're driving around, you been driving around for hours, and nothing has stuck out to you—that's a problem. Ya know what I'm saying?". Ten percent of officers, like Officer 57, considered that patrol officers should possess common sense, "Common sense is a big one. You gotta have some common sense. You gotta be able to recognize a potentially bad situation and be able to make those quick decisions about what you gotta do."

Two other qualities were also mentioned by 10% of the officers. Being fair and consistent in your dealings with suspects and the public was one of the qualities mentioned by Officer 66, "You have to look at things from an impartial point of view. Like in a domestic, usually two officers are sent and one talks to one side and the other talks to the other and then they exchange information. If you're only listening to one side, that's the side you'll probably lean to so you need to get both perspectives instead of taking one side. So you gotta go into each situation with an open mind, you can't have any biases on the job, or at least let them come out." When Officer 57 was asked about the qualities of good patrol officers, he, like 10% of other officers mentioned having understanding and empathy,

You have to have empathy, you can't just be a hard ass, you'll learn in a hurry that doesn't work. You almost gotta be, almost have a couple different personalities because there are

times when you go to a certain call where you're gonna need to be hard, you're gonna be stern, like at a bar fight, you can't just patty-cake them people, you gotta take control of the situation and sometimes you gotta do that to make sure that if nothing else, to be safe. Other times you go to a death scene or accident, maybe people are gonna look to you for comfort and they're gonna want you to make everything better. And even when you know you can't you gotta at least help them through that, try and give them some kind of assurance that they're gonna get through this.

Some of these “good officer” characteristics were, or will be, mentioned or referenced in different contexts. Communication will be a prominent theme within the upcoming discussion of effectiveness and efficiency. Community interaction was an important means of serving the purposes of patrol as well as figuring into officers’ preferences and their effective and efficient behavior. In an upcoming examination, beat knowledge was a characteristic of the concept of beat integrity while the concept of being a team player was referenced in the discussion of the practice of “jumping calls”. Finally, some officers mentioned the use of observation skills as a component in the general nature of patrol work. While three of the characteristics, patience, common sense, and self-motivation have value in a variety of fields of occupation, two of the characteristics mentioned, however, have important implications for law enforcement in the context of police legitimacy and procedural justice.

The three components of procedural justice are citizen participation in police decision-making process (that is citizens have a voice and are heard in their interactions with the police), police decision making that is neutral and fair, and citizens being treated with dignity and respect (Tyler, 2004). Perceptions of police legitimacy by citizens hinge on the demonstration of procedural justice by the police, especially in regard to the fairness in their interactions with the police (Sunshine and Tyler, 2003). The two qualities mentioned by officers in the current study, being fair and consistent, and having understanding and empathy, specifically address the procedural justice components of neutrality and fairness, and being treated with dignity and

respect. Understanding and empathy can help maintain citizen dignity and respect and along with communication skills, also facilitates citizens input and feedback in police interactions. It is important to recognize from these results that the officers in this study considered good patrol officers should possess qualities that foster legitimacy in dealing with the public.



## **HOW OFFICERS PERFORM PATROL WORK**

The other critical component in how officers manage their area of responsibility are the activities they engage and how they structure their available time to accommodate both departmental expectations and their own self-initiated activities. Officers demonstrated that they held certain beliefs about the purpose of patrol and what activities served those purposes, as well as their goals, feelings, and preferences about patrol. These components provide a framework or structure for how officers approach patrol as well as provide an outline for how officers will manage their area of responsibility. Officers then must find a way to use this framework to accomplish the actual work of patrolling. Connected to the answer of how officers do patrol work are the questions of what factors influenced them to approach patrol the way they do and how exactly they conduct patrol.

### **Prioritization of Activities at the Start of Shift**

Officers were first asked how they prioritize the start of their shift-what activities do they do first and why. This is the starting point in understanding how officers manage their area of responsibility. It allowed officers to relate what activities held the highest priority for them and how they go about incorporating those priorities in their workday. These priorities differ from officer goals. While goals were the things officers would like to see themselves accomplish during the workday, priorities related more to the things officers had to do; the departmental expectations, tasks, and duties necessary to start their shift and that guide their initial activities. These include, attending briefing, preparing the squad car, checking interdepartmental communications, handling any work carried over from the officers' previous shift, engaging in traffic enforcement, and answering the current, and holding, calls for service.

The prioritization process for most officers is somewhat standardized across shifts. First, they attend an approximately 15-minute briefing where the shift sergeant relays any important, pertinent information to the officers on the shift. Upon completion, officers will then pick up the keys for their assigned squad car and begin the process of setting up the car by logging into the computer system and checking radar calibrations and light operation.

Checking emails for any pertinent information was a frequently mentioned priority. The department expected that officers utilize and read email as it was one of the primary means of communicating shift information and intelligence. For example, Officer 55 said, " [After briefing and setting up the car], Next, I'll check my department emails, see if there is anything I need to do or any emails or phone calls that I have to return before hitting the streets [initiate patrolling]." Email communication kept officers apprised of any new tasks and expectations that might be waiting for officers. One officer noted, "Checking my emails, seeing if there's anything that has come out that I've been tasked to do. Like I've been tasked with, for example, we've got an upcoming police picnic at Brook Park, I was tasked with coordinating with our crime prevention lady to come up with a K-9 demo, so I would work on that, follow-up on voice mails, stuff like that." However, the reliance, or over reliance as perceived by many officers, on email, could cause some frustration. For example, Officer 27 stated, "I'll check my email but nine times out of ten, especially if my days off are during the week, I will have 60 plus emails so I try to get through those at home sometimes. They email us to death."

After checking email, officers said they finish any reports or follow-up investigations from the previous day. The department has an expectation that officers stay current with their job-related paperwork but many officers themselves liked to ensure their paper work was handled in a timely manner. As Officer 35 explained, "Once I start, if I haven't gotten everything

done from the previous shift, I try get that done. I don't like letting things go more than a couple of days. If I got reports or follow-up or something like that, I try to bang that out right away in the morning 'cause I don't like things getting too far behind." Officers viewed this paperwork as a priority because emerging work circumstances like call volume may keep them from completing their paperwork in a timely manner. For example, one officer noted "If I have anything from the day before I try to get that stuff done right away. Usually on evening shifts there's calls holding for us when we get there so if I don't get that stuff done right away or get the opportunity to get that stuff done right away-that's kinda what I do first."

Two other patrol duties emerged as priorities following checking email and catching up on work from their previous shift: Taking calls for service and traffic enforcement. The prioritization process for officers is always contingent on the urgency and number of calls for service. Calls for service that were holding at briefing (that is, a dispatch call assigned to an officer to be responded to after briefing) or that were dispatched to officers directly after briefing were typically given the top priority (after the officer obtained a car and logged into the on-board computer.) The department expects that officers give precedence to calls for service over other officer activities.

While calls for service take precedence over traffic enforcement, and were a more frequently mentioned priority, traffic enforcement is the next highest priority for officers. There was a general expectation from the department that officers work traffic. This officer said, "If I'm not taking call, I'm on what I call the race track, the main roads got a lot of traffic out here and our sergeant would like us to be visible and making traffic stops. If I'm not busy doing this [taking a call], X to Y to Z, doing the main crossroads, trying to do traffic violations and just be visible." Officers also gave traffic enforcement an initial priority as they said that they had a

limited window of time to accomplish it before the opportunity was lost to calls for service or the availability of traffic. To accommodate for these windows of opportunity, day shift officers worked morning rush hour traffic and monitored school zones in the morning before calls start coming in around noon. Evening shift officers worked the afternoon rush hour in between calls until call volume got to be too heavy. Night shift officers tried to get traffic enforcement accomplished early in the shift before the city got too quiet in the early morning to provide traffic enforcement opportunities or they worked the early commute towards the end of their shift. Officer 60 said, “Knowing that it will get busy in the afternoon, I’ll try and do some traffic stops, get some tickets in ‘cause I’m not gonna have that opportunity. So then just kinda looking for traffic, something to get into, then kinda after lunch you wait for the calls to come in.” Officer 20 also expressed a similar sentiment, “Normally I try to run traffic first unless it’s on a weekend and then I try to get a couple of things done right away then ‘cause I know for the rest of the night I’m going to be getting calls.” Officer 71 was also among the officers who addressed the need to get traffic enforcement done early before call volume increases. “Yeah I try and get out and find a traffic stop or two if I can. I mean it’s not that difficult, I mean we really should be getting one or two a day, it’s not that difficult. You get so busy in the afternoon if you don’t get it done in the morning, you’re probably not gonna get much.”

Other important priorities that officers mentioned somewhat less frequently when first hitting the streets included patrolling their problem areas or doing COPs, either as directed or self-initiated. For example, Officer 44 indicated one of the problem areas that was a focus on the beat was Courtview trailer court. Courtview is situated in a low SES area that typically had many calls for service, often involving disturbances, assaults, domestics, and gang and drug activity. “The first thing I usually do is come to Courtview, which is right there [indicating the trailer

court as the officer and I drove by] because a lot more people are active around this time versus two in the morning. I'll come to Courtview, I'll drive through it, which I didn't do today, I'll drive the whole area, the small roads between Courtview, look for suspicious stuff going on." Other officers also recognized areas on their beat where a police presence was a priority. For example, Officer 63 said, "If I got hotspots for burglaries I'll try and run through there right away in the morning just in case somebody's out and about." Officer 64 had a different focus saying, "The next step is I like to check my parks. It's such on this beat that often times if we don't stay on top of it, we get transients consuming alcohol, especially in Zebra Park on Q avenue."

For some day shift officers (12%), getting coffee was also a priority. Officer 59 half-jokingly said, "First thing I do is go to [convenience store] and get coffee and we ain't there yet so it's rather upsetting." Getting coffee was a priority for some officers because they knew that call volume might prevent that from happening later. Another officer explained, "During the summer, honestly, the first thing I do is try and grab a cup of coffee 'cause I know sometimes, couple times, supervisors don't understand why you go have coffee at the start of the shift. I happen to know on this shift if I don't grab a cup of coffee right away I'm probably not gonna get a chance. It really starts getting busy right around noon. So I'll go grab a cup of coffee, visit with the guys a little bit."

Though some officers like Officer 59 spoke lightheartedly about prioritizing coffee, getting coffee also served an important purpose: social support, and an opportunity for officers to bond. This has important implications for officers. Patterson (2003) found that officers who sought social support from within the department had reductions in psychological distress and Lord (1996) found that officers reduced the use of disengagement from work as a negative coping strategy for work stress when they received social support from co-workers. In the

current study officers found an opportunity in a slower part of the workday to engage in this social support utilizing a common component of the workday—the coffee break.

When Officer 60 was asked about prioritization at the start of his shift he provided some additional insight into the act of getting coffee:

Coffee. You get to talk with your other beat partners. In some small way it depends on how your day prior went. There's more to going to coffee than just having a cup of coffee, it's unwinding, talking to other officers, 'Hey I had a real crappy day yesterday' or 'I had a real interesting call', you talk with other officers. It's almost a counseling session, you can talk with them about stuff. In some small way you're opening up to them without saying I need some help, you know what I mean? It's kind of a way to cope with things you've seen the day prior or like that homicide we were on last week. I and another officer got sent to that and so the next day you can kinda decompress and talk about it [rather] than going to see a counselor. We're each other's counselors. So there's more to coffee than just having a cup of coffee.

In summary, how officers start their shift, and what their initial priorities are, were standardized, Officers initially attended to the logistic components of their work day: briefing, obtaining and setting up a squad car, addressing and finishing left over work. Following this, officers will work traffic primarily as the time allowed. Calls for service, depending on their importance, will take precedence over running traffic or even email or unfinished work. This initial prioritization process is driven by departmental expectations to a great degree and involves officer choice infrequently. A few officers also sought to prioritize coffee breaks as it provided an important opportunity to engage in social support with one another.

### **Officers' Methodological Influences on Patrol Methods**

Officers held beliefs and attitudes about patrolling that formed a framework for their view of patrol work. Officers also had the opportunity to discuss their patrol priorities, use of patterns, and techniques while patrolling. The views officers hold and the behavior they engage in during patrol could be considered their patrol methodology and officers were also asked what influences helped define their patrol methodology, that is, the factors that led them to patrol the

way they do. When officers considered what things influenced the development of their patrol methodology, a few common responses emerged. The three most frequently cited influences were the officers' own experiences as patrol officers, the training experience, and association with, and knowledge from, other officers. Many officers identified a mix of influences. Sixty-six percent of officers cited their own experiences, either solely (17% of all officers), or as one of a number of factors, as being instrumental in the development of their methodology. Forty-nine percent of the officers referenced the training experience either solely (8%) or in combination with other factors. Only 20% of the officers mentioned other officers' influences as helping to formulate their patrol methodology. A few lesser cited influences included officer personality, crime statistics, officer preferences, and beat characteristics.

### **Influences by Officer Experience**

The level of officer experience appeared to have some bearing on how officers considered their methodology was derived (Figure 3). Novice and experienced officers frequently mentioned training, and then experience, as the major influences. For novice and experienced officers, other officers were also more of a prominent source of influence on their methodology. As officer experience increased, established and veteran officers cited experience as more influential in how their patrol methodology developed while references to the training process decreased. With these established and veteran officers, the influence of other officers as a factor in their patrol methodology was mentioned much less frequently than less experienced officers. This may signal an adaptation process occurring; what officers know and experience comes to define how they do their work. Their experience functions as a feedback loop allowing them to refine the way they conduct their work and as their experience grows, they consider or

accept less influence coming from other officers or the organizational precepts derived from the training process



Figure 3. Officers’ methodological influences by officer experience

### Techniques

An important aspect of how officers manage their area of responsibility is the techniques that officers utilize while patrolling. Officers engage in different activities such as patrolling through neighborhoods and traffic enforcement, so an examination of the manner and specific way that they perform these activities is warranted. Officers were asked about what tactics or techniques they engaged in while doing patrol work. Officers identified a diversity of techniques which were divided into three themes: These techniques (examples shown below) were related to *patrol*, defined as techniques incorporated specifically into patrol duties that are not related to traffic enforcement, *traffic*, defined as techniques incorporated specifically into traffic enforcement duties, and a *general* theme which included techniques that could be employed in either patrol or traffic situations. The most frequently mentioned techniques, indicated by the percentage of officers referencing the technique, are noted below.



- Patrol
  - Focus patrol on high crime/activity areas (34%)
  - Use foot patrol for both community contact & stealth (19%)
  - Use bike patrol for both community contact & stealth (15%)
  - Blackout the squad car [turn off all the lights and turn the radio and computer screen down] when patrolling for prowlers (15%)
  - Establish field contacts (10%)
  - Cover or show a presence in all areas of beat (8%)
  - Use eviction/housing to get rid of problem people<sup>11</sup> (8%)
    - In the study city, officers would work with landlords, the police department's housing liaison, and the county housing authority to find ways to evict an individual that has been causing disruptions, dealing drugs, or were the source of other problems.
- Traffic
  - Stationary position for both deterrence and citations when doing traffic (22%)
  - Focus traffic enforcement on main roads (15%)
  - Run all plates visually accessible to the officer (14%)
  - Run a background check when doing a likely criminal plate check (10%)
  - Stop vehicles on minor violations just to investigate (10%)
- General
  - Utilize specialized equipment (unmarked car, LIDAR, or night vision) (12%)
  - Use intelligence to locate and concentrate on problems (12%)

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<sup>11</sup> This term, used by officers, refers to people who are frequently the cause for calls for service; individuals who are frequently involved in crimes, disturbances, or other problems.

## Effectiveness and Efficiency in Patrolling

While officers were free to mention a wide variety of techniques in the patrol work, they were also asked to consider the effectiveness and efficiency of what they do. Presumably, officers will want to be effective and efficient, and engaging in these types of activities will influence how they manage their areas of responsibility. When effectiveness and efficiency are examined from an institutional perspective, those concepts take on a level of performance standard for the institution, similar to how Skogan (1976) considered these characteristics are viewed and measured. For officers, the question of effectiveness and efficiency also becomes one of a performance standard in managing their area of responsibility; how well are they able to perform carrying out their duties and activities.

Effective activities were defined for officers as things they engaged in that helped them be more productive in accomplishing a particular goal or function, the things that gave them “more bang for their buck”. Efficient activities were defined for officers as the things they did that saved time, energy, and resources, or the things that made doing their job easier. When I asked officers which of their activities they felt were effective and efficient, a number of officers took time to reflect as they had not considered the activities they engage in in terms of effectiveness and efficiency. Officers were able to provide a wide variety of responses regarding their actions and activities on patrol which they felt were effective and/or efficient. In a few instances, the activities that officers related were considered by them as both effective and efficient. Taking effective action was seen as being efficient as it was best utilizing officers’ time and resources.

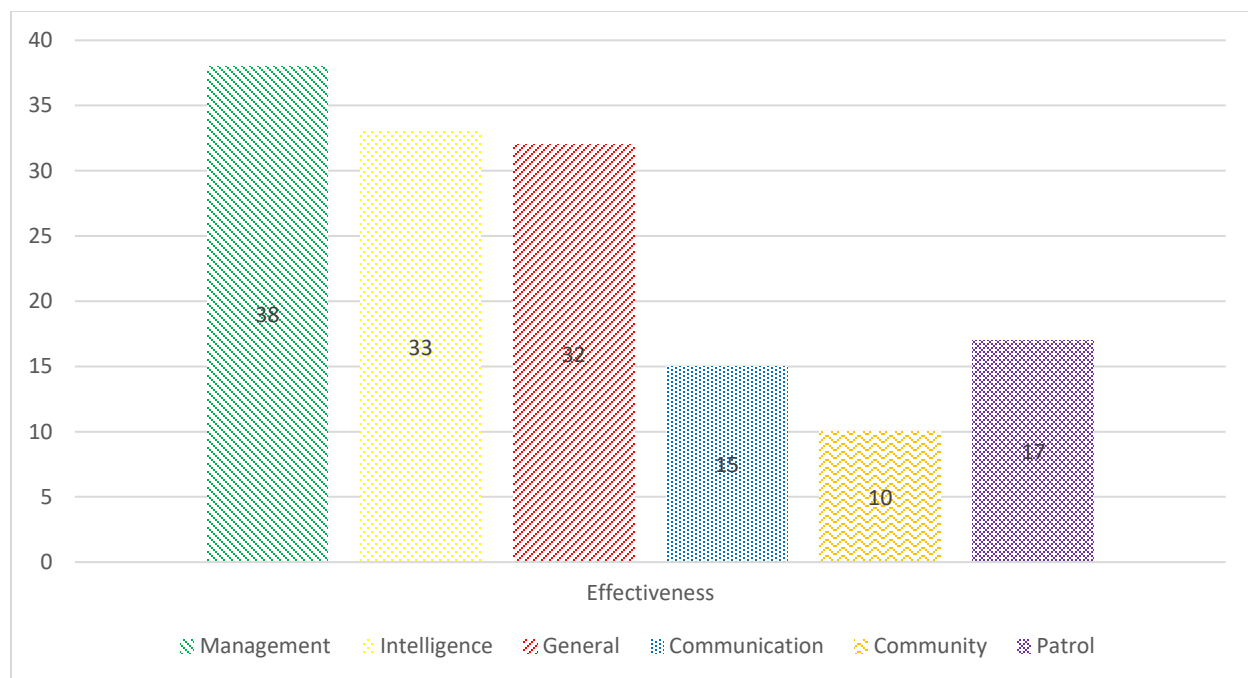
In both effectiveness and efficiency, a wide variety of activities and practices emerged which could be grouped into seven themes. The *communication* theme typically referred to

building rapport or establishing communication in field contacts and service calls. A *community* theme centered on interaction with citizens or businesses in the community. A *general* theme referred to actions that can be applied more generally across officers' patrol activities while *patrolling* and *traffic* themes centered on the specific activities of unassigned time beat patrol and traffic enforcement. The *management* theme referenced ways that officers managed their beat in terms of workload, prioritization and focus and the *intelligence* theme included the ways that officers utilized and gathered intelligence. These were not mutually exclusive themes as things that officers believed were effective or efficient might encompass components of the different themes. For example, both communication and intelligence themes may be referenced if officers find it effective to use their communication skills to gather important intelligence. As officers' responses were quite varied, the most frequently mentioned activities under the themes are noted here.

### **Effectiveness**

Officers referred to activities that fell under the themes of management, intelligence, and general more frequently than communication, community, patrolling, and traffic themes (see Figure 4) but the themes were not mutually exclusive. There were four prominent effective activities that encompassed some of the different themes; a focus on areas of high activity, building rapport, using intelligence to focus efforts, and deterrence.

A focus on areas of activity involved the management and general themes; respectively officers endorsed patrolling and maintaining visibility in high crime and problem areas while providing less attention to low activity areas (25%) and focusing on certain areas of the beat (25%). Officers noted that they are most effective in the places with the greatest activity or importance to the police.



*Figure 4.* Frequency of officers' references to effective themes

Officers perceived patrolling in higher crime areas to be effective in reducing crime and quieting problems, especially in comparison to patrolling in neighborhoods with few problems. For example, Officer 46 said, “I guess another way to be more efficient and effective is to focus on your heavier problem spots. I'm not going to be very effective or efficient if I spend all my time in an area of the beat where crime is pretty low. Then it's not really accomplishing anything at all. It's not benefiting the higher crime areas and if there's no crime in a certain area, they're not getting anything out of it either. So I try and focus on the main areas where we have issues.” This approach by officers is reflected in the literature, for example Braga (2001), Braga and Bond (2008) and Avdiya (2008) found that focusing on hotspots reduced calls for service and disorder.

Building rapport with different members of the public involved themes of community, communication, and intelligence. Nineteen percent of officers referenced using the rapport they built with the public to gather information and assist in gaining compliance. For example, Officer

31 said, "Getting to know the people in my beat, that's important. I mean at some point in patrol you'll get a lot of information. The ones who live there know what going on, they tell me." This information informed officers of problems in the area, the presence of problem people, and intelligence about crimes that had been committed.

Officer 55 explained the importance of establishing different kinds of contacts,

Every patrol officer knows their beat, every patrol officer knows their problem children [this officer's way of describing "problem people"] in their beat, it's the reason we have a job, it's the reason we do what we do. And a lot of times these patrol officers will know when they get called to an address they know who they're gonna deal with. But if you get that opportunity to go out and talk to them before, what I define as a soft contact versus a hard contact, I try to match all my hard contacts with my problem children with soft contacts. It just tends to be more effective that way, 'cause when I show up to deal with them I have no problems with them. They're not always having hard contacts with me, they're having soft contact.

While in the field with officers, I noted that when officers made field contacts or when they spoke to subjects involved in dispatch calls, the officers gathered information in an unassuming yet effective way. For example, an officer might stop a person riding a bike at night without a light, or drinking alcohol in a public park (both violations of city ordinances), in order to both address the issue and gather information. The officer would approach the individual, and in a neutral to friendly tone, inform the subject why the contact was being made. The officer would ask for identification, typically downplaying the importance of it, for example, telling the subject "just so I can tell 'em who I talked to", and would check the name and date of birth through dispatch for any warrants or cautions. Typically, a few minutes passed before dispatch returned the results of the check and in that time the officer has been gathering information in a casual, friendly manner. Officers asked what they were doing in the area, if they lived nearby, where they lived, if they're working and where, if they have family in the area, the places they frequent, and other assorted personal questions.

With most contacts in which officers adopted this style, the subjects tended to respond back willingly with information to the inquiries as well as sometimes providing additional information as they engage in a conversation with the officer even though they had no obligation to talk to the officer. It is possible this conversational style draws subjects into engaging with the officers, making information gathering easier. Individuals may be more likely to respond to a friendly conversation than to a different approach that feels more like an interrogation to them. Eventually dispatch would return its results to the officer and if nothing requiring a more serious law enforcement action became evident, either through dispatch or the officer's observation, the officer might choose not to issue a citation for the offense, issue a warning about the behavior instead, and then break off the contact.

When officers are able to build this rapport with members of the public or subjects they can accomplish a few things. If the particular contact does not warrant a definitive law enforcement action, like an arrest or the issuance of a citation, officers' friendly approach may generate less animosity and legal cynicism in the "innocent" subject. Officers can also gather information on the subject which can be mentally stored away and shared with other officers when needed. Officers will also use the information gathered to gauge the truthfulness of what the subject is telling them; looking for verbal slip-ups or mistakes between what is known about the subject and what the subject tells the officer, within the context of the present situation. For example, if a subject told the officer he lived in the area and was just walking home but it was known to the officer that the subject lived on the other side of town, this would raise suspicions and might prompt the officer to investigate or take a more interrogative approach.

An area of activity that was related to both management and intelligence themes, referenced by 15% of officers was using intelligence to focus their efforts. For example, Officer 21 said,

...and I can see every police report taken in my area and on the map it'll show me the location of that crime and what type of crime it was so then you can flip from just recent to any type of time frame you want so you can see patterns going on, if there's a certain area that cars are being broken into, or vandalism, or graffiti, or stuff like that so I can use that to kind of alter where I'm patrolling and how much time I'm spending in various neighborhoods. That's one of the things they're trying to get is so that officers on the street can have access to as much of that information in the reports as we can so we can use that to formulate how we spend our free time patrolling in different neighborhoods.

Related to both the themes of patrolling and traffic, the activity of establishing their presence for a deterrent effect in certain areas was seen as effective by 15% of officers.

However, this was more often referenced in the context of traffic enforcement than in patrolling. The areas where they established their presence were those with higher levels of public activity or crime and the visibility of their presence was believed to be noticed by members of the public and potential criminals, decreasing the likelihood they would engage in illegal or dangerous behavior.

Officer 30 explained how he tries to enhance his visibility for a deterrent effect, "I'm looking for a prowler I'm driving up and down the roads with all my lights on. All my overheads, not my red and blues, but my spotlights and everything so I'm lighting up as much area as I can and if someone is three blocks away and they see this car rolling down the street, with all these lights on, they're probably gonna identify it's a cop and they're gonna leave the area, knowing that we're there." Officer 30 also noted that a heavy presence and activity by officers raises driver awareness and thus deterrence, "...so I might drive up and down that road six, seven times ya know, making those traffic stops and it's kinda about being seen. I know that I'm being effective 'cause if I am pulling one person over everybody else that's coming along is slowing

down and paying a little bit more attention so again it's kinda the way I feel that we are, that I am, effective in accomplishing the things I wanna get done is I'm being seen."

While Officer 16 considered a long-term presence in certain areas as effective for traffic enforcement, Officer 68 recognized that despite having an active presence, deterrence may simply be displacement, "And I've always felt that when I was doing that [looking for criminogenic situations while patrolling] very actively and aggressively that there were less reports of broken in garages, things like that. I can't take credit for it all but I believe, especially on nights, crimes are occurring that having a police car driving around constantly is a good deterrent. It might only displace it or change it to another time frame, to another night, but you never know.

**Effectiveness by type of officer.** What officers considered effective varied dependent on their descriptive categories (Figure 5). District 2 officers tended to reference more items related to effective management and general techniques than other effectiveness themes while District 3 officers referenced effective activities more often in the context of intelligence use. Novice officers tended to view management and general activities as effective while experienced officers included intelligence use as well in being effective. Both day and evening officers frequently referenced themes of intelligence and management but while evening officers also tended to include general and patrol techniques in the assessment of effectiveness, day officers more frequently referenced effective communication.

### **Efficiency**

Similar to effectiveness, there was wide range in officers' responses regarding efficiency, however, only three of the themes stood out to any degree with officers' references, management, intelligence, and general (see Figure 6). Different than effectiveness, the most



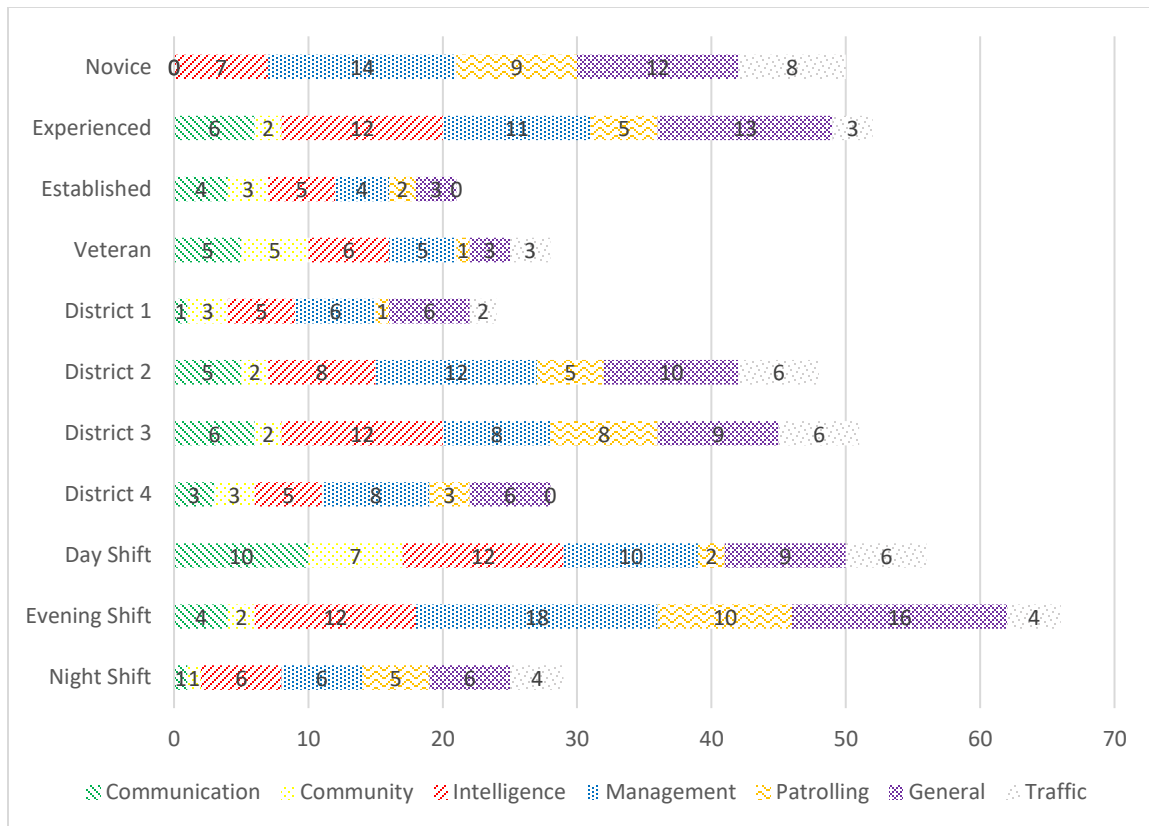


Figure 5. Frequency of officer categories' reference to effectiveness themes

frequently endorsed efficient activities were more specific to individual themes, with frequently endorsed activities related only to management and intelligence.

Management activities were mentioned to a much greater degree than the other two themes and while there was again a very wide range of efficient activities referenced by officers, three specific activities were mentioned more frequently in the management theme; having and utilizing technology, multi-tasking, and the manner in which service calls and report writing are handled. Most prominent was having and utilizing technology (22%). Officers identified a number of ways that technology, especially the technology available to them in the patrol car, assisted their efficiency by saving time and effort. Officers related how technology facilitates and speeds up report and citation writing, communication, and access to intelligence.

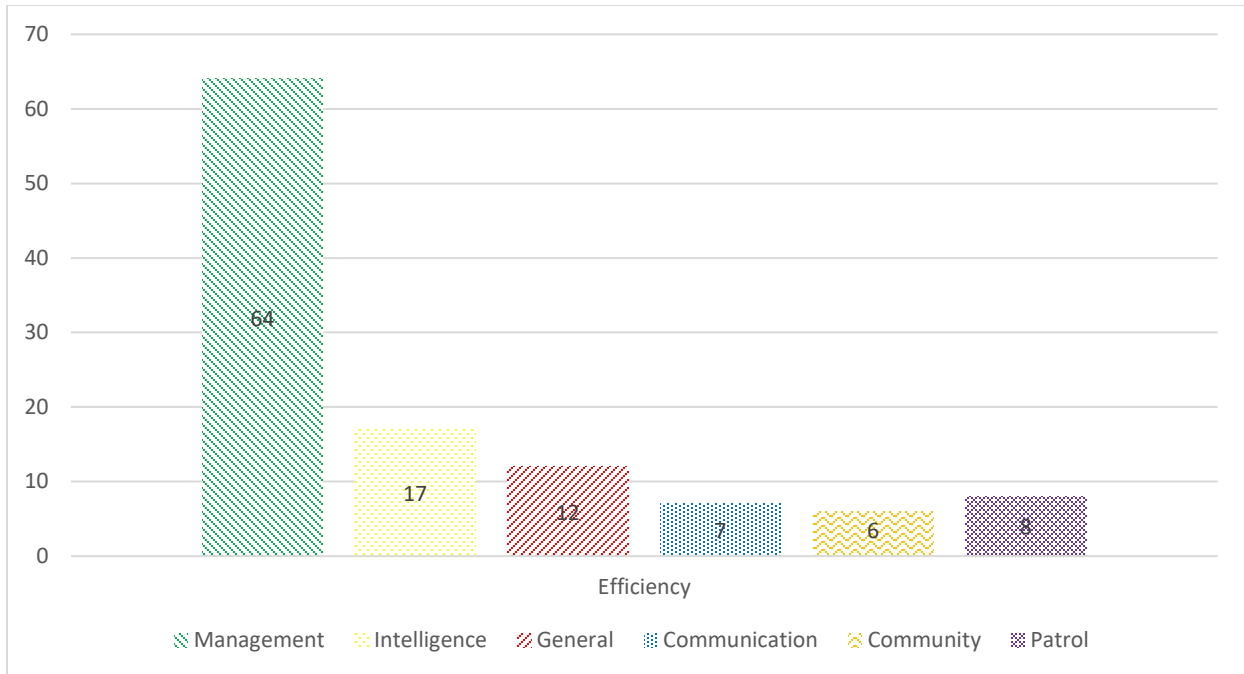


Figure 6. Frequency of officers' reference to efficient themes

Officers also mentioned things like being able to access active warrant lists from the car, the dispatch screen in the car that shows the current calls and officer(s) assigned, and utilizing the mapping and officer position system as technological components that help with their efficiency. While Officer 70 recognized that technology is important, there may be an over-reliance on the convenience of technology,

I guess what makes our job easier today is the technology. We all swear about New World (software system) but when it comes down to it, without having an MBC [in-car computer] or the communications equipment that we have would really, for all intents and purposes, cripple us. When we don't have the ability of using our MBCs, whether we're looking at the map to see where our partners are or whether we're looking at other people's calls for service to see what people are dealing with or just the general information I have on the screen right now—we've gotten so used to it.

Multi-tasking, mentioned by 12% of the officers, in managing their beats involved officers trying to accomplish multiple tasks or goals at once. Officer 29 elaborated on this, "A lot of the times I'll just park myself out on the street and do radar at the same time or be in an area where we have problems like Courtview trailer court. I'd park on a street on Courtview, fill out

reports if I got reports, and you got a squad car presence which is killing two birds with one stone, being in areas you've got a problem. So that's something that I think increases effectiveness and efficiency." In the field, I also noted that officers typically operated the computer as they drove; pulling up different screens, glancing at report information, typing in plates, and typing report information while patrolling, travelling to calls, or making jail runs. As Officer 36 noted, "If I were taking someone to jail, I'll work on my arrest report on the way there in an effort to save time there."

Another important component to officer efficiency under the management theme was their ability to handle calls quickly and complete the reports later (10%). With officers assessing their call volume, it was seen as efficient to handle the calls effectively but as quickly as can be accomplished. Officers would opt to hold off on report writing until later in the shift when there was downtime, rather than right after the call when other calls may be coming in or other duties may take precedence. For example, Officer 52 said, "So taking those calls, doing the bare minimum, doing the report later, will put you back with more stuff on your plate but again you gotta keep those calls going otherwise those calls are just gonna stack up and it'll be a never-ending day." Likewise, Officer 57 found it efficient to hold the reports for later, "Like reports and stuff. If you go on a call and take a report and you stop and do your report immediately, that might be good for getting the information in the report but if it's midnight and you're working on a report that's gonna take you 45 minutes or an hour, that's a big chunk of your prime patrol time that you're eating up doing that report. Realistically, more than likely you'll have time to do that report later. So that's probably the biggest thing, time management."

In contrast to trying to get through a call as quickly as possible to be efficient, a few officers (8%) took a different approach and believed it was efficient spending extra time solving

problems when answering calls so officers do not have to return again. By solving the problem or providing a citizen with a solution officers would not have to return to a recurrent problem or have to take a report on an issue that could have been proactively prevented. While officers realized that calls should be handled quickly, some officers related that trying to solve the problem sometimes runs counter to handling the call quickly but may actually save time in the long run. One officer said,

I think the way that I'm viewed in the department., maybe more than others, I put too much effort into different things but I think that's efficient because my goal is to help everybody, not just get the job done. Like some officers will go into a call and just put a Band-Aid on it and get out, where my goal would be to solve the problem so nobody else has to come back...like if somebody comes in we call 96, that's crazy, into the station many officers would do, and I'm not blaming anyone here, but many officers would just do what they had to do just to get that person out the door, where I would sit there and I would listen to that person for a while because usually they're venting about something and they don't have anyone else to talk to so if you push them out the door that venting doesn't get done and they just continue to vent to others and we get more calls and calls.

Under the theme of intelligence, 14% of officers stated having good beat knowledge made their patrolling more efficient. Having a good beat knowledge meant patrol time was spent focusing on areas where calls were more likely or where there was a greater need for officer presence. In this way officers were more readily available to focus on areas that needed their presence and they believed their calls for service response time was reduced.

**Efficiency by type of officer.** Relatively little variation was found amongst officer categories when discussing efficiency. Across all the district and experience categories, the main focus of officers' efficiency was in beat management. The only exception was more frequent responses from evening officers referencing intelligence use as efficient as well.

In regard to efficiency, management of their duties were referenced frequently with officers finding a benefit in the technology available to them and in basic time management that saves their time and effort. Officers also attempted to engage in multi-tasking as well as handling

their calls quickly, though some officers felt that spending more time on calls resulted in greater overall efficiency. Officers also frequently referenced the general theme of focusing on high crime areas over low crime areas and the theme of intelligence use and good beat knowledge as further examples of efficiency.

### **Patterns, Randomness, and Predictability**

One point of inquiry was in officers' use of patterns while on patrol. Officers understood pattern to mean a predetermined patrol route through the beat, or an area of the beat, that is repeated with some degree of frequency. For example, an officer travelling in a loop utilizing the same four main roads while working traffic enforcement for an extended period of time would be considered utilizing a pattern.

It is important, in order to understand beat management, to determine if officers found value in utilizing patterns of geographic coverage during patrol. Efficiency and effectiveness in the logistic management of their beat may be dependent on utilizing patterns to manage the geographic component as suggested by Ruan and colleagues (2005). While researchers have attempted to determine how to calculate the most effective and efficient routes through beats, the views of officers on using established routes may provide insight on how they manage their area of responsibility.

Very few officers stated that they utilized a pattern and when they did it was typically in reference to utilizing a pattern at the start of the shift for the purpose of beat assessment. Officers may patrol through all their hotspots or high traffic activity areas to get a feel of what the beat will be like. However, 86% of the officers did not utilize patterns and provided a number of reasons why they did not. These reasons ranged from not wanting to be predictable, the desire to be random, and a fear that criminals will pick up on the pattern, to issues of officer safety, and avoiding the frustration of not being able to complete a predetermined pattern because of the fluidity of patrol.

However, of the 51 officers who did not use patterns, 24% recognized that they do engage in patterned behavior. While it was clear that the vast majority of officers had a desire to not be predictable in their patrolling, engaging in patterned behavior occurred because of the limitations and expectations placed on officers in any particular beat, on any particular shift. For example, the evening shift tended to be the busiest shift for call volume. Officers typically are dispatched right out of briefing or have calls holding for them by the time they finish in briefing. Evening shift officers also know that there is an expectation that they run traffic and that their best opportunity to run traffic is during the afternoon rush hour. If an evening shift officer has a beat that encompasses some of the major thoroughfares in the city, it is in a sense predictable as to where that officer is going to be at a certain time of the day. If not answering calls, it is likely that the officer will be patrolling those major thoroughfares during the rush hour period and that the officer will probably continue to engage in that patterned behavior day after day. For example, Officer 35 said, “So I guess that’s always been kind of a thinking of mine so I guess I wouldn’t say I have a pattern but I do try to keep in mind what’s going to serve the most good. On 3 o’clock [p.m.] on a Friday, me driving around a residential area probably isn’t going to do as much good as driving around P Avenue [a busy major thoroughfare].” If officers want to or have to run traffic, whether to obtain cites or act as a deterrent, officers will place themselves in a high target area with the most likely chance of accomplishing their goal of effective traffic enforcement. Officers are less productive running traffic on quiet side streets or late at night where and when traffic volume is low.

Similarly, if an officer’s beat contains a number of hotspots of criminal activity and areas of high calls for service, it is likely the officer will be focusing attention there and not in an area of low activity because it will provide more opportunities to meet departmental expectations,

personal preferences, and goals, as well as serve the purposes of patrol. If a night shift officer has large residential areas that prowlers [individuals sneaking around in the night looking for buildings or vehicles to break in to] may target, it is predictable in the late evening and early morning hours that the officer will be patrolling these neighborhoods looking for prowlers, especially when there is an expectation that officers engage in that kind of behavior.

So as officers try to avoid patterns they also realize to be effective they must focus their attention in the same areas and engage in the same activities, often at set time periods. Officer 19 said, “As far as patterns, you try to stay away from them, you don’t want to be predictable. Obviously, date, and time, and place, ya know. You don’t want somebody to figure out where you are all the time. But at the same time, you’re still at the same places, with the same goals and everything like that. It can be kind of a challenge that way.” Officer 23 also remarked on the need to balance unpredictability in patrol with the need to be effective, “It’s not hard on Beat X but when I worked Beat Y sometimes you get in a cycle of just having to run the same loop, checking the same places. You just try to be conscious of that and switch it up, don’t do it the same all the time, you don’t want it to be routine.”

The mix of departmental expectations and officer-driven focuses within the context of shift, beat, and time of day increase the predictability of some officer patrol patterns. For example, a beat with a school on it will likely have the beat officer in that area during the morning hours during the school year because the department and the public expect that of them. Beats immediately adjacent to the downtown beat might show an absence of police presence around bar close time on the weekends because of departmental and officer expectations that officers focus on an area of heavy activity. Night shift officers likely will forgo patrolling for prowlers in an upper-class neighborhood that has relatively few calls for service in favor of

looking for prowlers in the areas of new construction that frequently report thefts of tools and building materials. During mid-morning, district day shift officers will likely have coffee together somewhere. Finally, it may be predictable that at five or six in the morning, night shift officers are more concerned about finishing up any reports they have and are less likely to be actively patrolling.

At other times and places, officers have the autonomy and discretion to exercise a degree of randomness in their individualized patrol decisions. If an officer has unassigned time they may choose to make a COP run through a park, then take a stationary position on a main thoroughfare for deterrence, then pick up a warrant sheet to attempt some arrests. Officers are able to incorporate that unpredictability in their work. Officers can drive down one street in a neighborhood, then randomly turn down another, then circle back, or utilize any number of different routes to cover their beat and demonstrate randomness. It is when beat and shift structure are combined with expectations, as well as some degree of officer focus, that officers' behavior becomes patterned and predictable. Some officers recognize this and try to incorporate randomness within their predictable behavior. For example, Officer 70 said, "I mean obviously you're gonna drive the same streets at certain times on a given night but if you do it in a manner—if people knew I was gonna drive down this roadway at 12:15 every night and again at 1:30 and then at 2:10, then they can start gauging when I'm gonna be there, start establishing a pattern. I try and stay away from patterns though I will drive the same streets or roadways multiple times a night." Officer 25 also voiced a similar view, "I try not to get stuck in patterns. I know patterns get people killed, I think. So there are places that I check, I have routine stops that I make, but I don't do them on a particular day, go to M street, or on a particular day go to H



avenue. It's usually 'Let's go check them out' at some point in my time during the shift, make sure I hit all those spots."

Overall, most officers were resistant to the use of patterns during patrol but many also recognized there was a certain predictability to their overall focus areas and efforts as officers determine what is effective and efficient patrolling. While attempts have been made to design patrol routes that incorporate both randomness and effective coverage (Rosenshine, 1970; Ruan, Meirina, Yu, Pattipati and Popp, 2005), officers may resist the use of pre-determined patrol routes. Many officers thought that patterns can put officers at risk or allow criminals to predict and take advantage of officers' movement through a beat. They felt that it is the officer's introduction of randomness to patrolling that keeps their movements unpredictable. The autonomy that officers desire and enjoy as part of patrolling may preclude them from using a patrol route that was designed without their input and dictates their behavior.

The use of pre-determined patrol routes may also be problematic in a logistic sense. Officers would be expected to follow pre-determined patrol routes to demonstrate effectiveness and efficiency but they may likely hold different views as to what constitutes effective and efficient beat coverage and the proper amount of patrol, within their available time to patrol.

### **Beat Coverage**

The need to address other duties, high call volume and lengthy, complex calls might prevent officers from being able to start or finish patrolling a certain portion of their beat. Officers had already indicated that in managing their beat they focus their resources in some areas in favor of others, now the examination turns to how they patrol areas of their beat when faced with the circumstances that could inhibit their patrol. Officers were asked whether they felt the need to finish an area they had previously been patrolling before being interrupted by a

dispatch call, and whether they felt the need to cover areas of their beat on a following shift if they had not covered those areas on the previous shift. Nineteen percent of officers said they would not return to the previous area of patrol, and while a few officers simply stated they would return, the majority of officers (76%) indicated that whether they returned to the previous area was conditional. A few officers cited reasons such as if the previous area was geographically close to the call, whether the call generated a report, if call volume allowed, or the time of day, (as their return to the area was dependent on whether the window of opportunity for their activity, like traffic, was still open).

Of the officers who said their return would be conditional, 67% of those said they would return to the previous area of patrol if they had been engaged in a specific duty or activity, like running traffic, hunting warrants, checking new construction areas for prowlers, or trying to accomplish COPs. Finally, a few officers indicated whether they returned depended more on their preferences at the time for example, if another area of focus near the call draws their attention because of new developments, or simply a desire to patrol a nearby neighborhood or focal area.

The question of whether officers would feel the need to try to patrol a particular area that was not patrolled on the officers' previous shift depends on the officers' understanding that not all portions of their beat deserve the same amount of patrol time as any other portion. Some portions of their beat simply warranted much less of their attention. This view is in line with officers' desire to be both effective and efficient by focusing on high crime and activity areas rather than low crime and activity areas. Officers may not show a presence in some areas of their beat for days simply because the lack of criminal activity or calls for service in that area do not

warrant officers spending their time and energy resources in an area where little effect will be seen.

It is within this context that the responses from officers (N=56) should be considered. Some officers (41%) simply stated they attempt to hit an area they missed on a previous shift. However, 57% percent of officers stated they did not feel a need to patrol an area not previously patrolled specifically noting that not all areas of their beat require patrol coverage. Some areas of the beat had such low criminal activity and calls for service that officers did not feel it necessary to make an effort to cover these areas if they had not been covered on their previous shift. For example, one officer said, “But there are streets that I probably never hit, I know there are—just up north of [county roadway] on my beat, that's a residential area, all brand new, no sidewalks, every house has got an alarm in it, so unless there's an alarm going off I'm not going there, people don't come outside, they don't have neighborhoods.” Officer 71 held a similar view, “Nope. I, this might just be me, but there's a good portion of my beat that I never hit [patrol] because of the no crime activity, but that's not necessarily a good thing because they wanna see you in the neighborhood. But I spend most of my time looking for traffic or in the higher problem areas.”

Twenty-nine percent of officers also mentioned that trying to patrol a previously missed area was also contingent on whether there had been recent activity. One officer explained, “I mean, if it's an area that's been having a problem and for whatever reason I didn't get there, yeah, I'm going to make it a point to get there. If it's just I didn't get there 'cause we don't have any calls for service and we don't usually have an issue out there—no it's not really high on the list. Now you really don't want to forget about it and never go out there but...” Officer 35 elaborated further on this, “It does, again it kinda depends on what the area is. If it's an area that

I haven't got to and it's an area that I've never been called to, never had an issue with, it'll be on my mind but it won't be a priority to get to, even that night. The next day I'll try to but if I don't I'm not gonna lose any sleep over it. If it's an area where I know we're gonna have issues or we've had a lot of issues, like we have an area, Dogwood Court, [a pseudonym for a low-income housing area] that we've been called to on this beat a lot, if for some reason, on some day, I don't get there, I try to make sure that's one spot I get to the next day."

Just a few officers (2%) did not feel that hitting a missed area was necessary either because beat size or activity made it unlikely they would not get to an area during their shift or that the officers would pass any concerns on to the next shift asking them for coverage or presence if an area was missed.

While officers did recognize the need and expectation to show some level of presence around all of their beat, very few officers made specific mention of it. In the discussion of beat coverage three officers felt it was important to get to all portions of their beat and two officers with large beats tried to spread their presence around on the beat over the week. Here, as seen with other responses, officers feel certain areas warrant their attention more than others even in their attempt to provide wide beat coverage. For example, one officer said, "I try to get to every one section of my beat in a night but some guys think they need to hit every block on every street but I think that that leads to a lot of time that could be used more productively."

The questions of beat coverage sought to determine how officers responded to obstacles or interruptions in patrolling and to try to gauge, to a certain degree, if officers were concerned with, or felt the need to provide wide geographic coverage of their beat. Officers again focused on addressing problem areas, returning to patrol areas when interrupted or absent if there had been recent or historical criminal activity, or if the officer had been engaged in a particular task.

Having a problem focus orientation in this assists officers in being efficient and effective in managing their area of responsibility as they make the best use of their time and focus their resources where they will have the largest effect.

### **Level of Patrol**

With officers indicating a number of factors having an effect on patrolling, the time actually available to patrol could vary widely depending on these factors. The time available for patrol can become an important concern for officers and affect where they patrol, and how, in an effort to make the best use of their available time and resources. Some officers indicated that they often have little time for patrolling because of the obstacles they face and this interview question gave officers an opportunity to determine the extent that they may actually patrol.

Officers were asked to estimate the average amount of their shift time spent patrolling versus answering calls (N=56). Responses were split into four percentage categories of patrolling time; 25% or less of their time (Very Low), 26% to 50% (Low), 51% to 75% (High), and 76% or more of their time (Very High). Very few officers (those who were in Districts 3 and 4) estimated their patrolling as exceeding 75% of their shift time. The rest of the individual officers' assessments of their patrol time were essentially an even distribution across the other three levels of patrolling, with no level of patrolling being the predominant mode Figure 7 demonstrates the difference in patrolling time between districts and shifts. District 3 and the evening shift stand out as having the least time to patrol, while night shift officers typically engaged in a high level of patrolling.

A number of officers in the interviews made reference to running from "call to call" however these officers tended to work busier shifts or beats and was not typical of all officers. While some officers who complained about continually high call volume did not have that bear

out during the ride-along, there were other occasions where officers in fact did have little time for patrol and often had calls waiting for them or were dispatched shortly after clearing their last call. This sometimes affected the interview process. While some interviews occurred at a leisurely pace, on some occasions it was difficult to ask all the interview questions in the time allotted for the ride-along because of high call volume or the length of time required for the call. More serious incidents that might involve violent crimes, active investigations, multiple witnesses, and a large amount of evidence required more of the officer's time and may also require report taking or evidence handling. The majority of an officer's shift could sometimes be filled dealing with just a handful of calls and officers then must find time to perform their other tasks and fulfill the expectations of the department.

Some calls, because of their complexity could take an hour or more before the officer finally cleared the call. One call I accompanied an officer on involved a business owner who claimed individuals were trying to sell him his own stolen merchandise. The call took over an hour and half and required calls to a storage facility manager, and an officer more expert in the evidence in question, as well as a trip to another location to search a dumpster to verify the accused's story.

While some officers noted they spend their shift running from call to call, for some officers, like those on the night shift, call volume may not be very high. While these very busy shift scenarios can be true, for the study department, the equal split among officers between patrolling levels indicates that neither running call to call or extended periods of time without calls for service were typical for all officers.

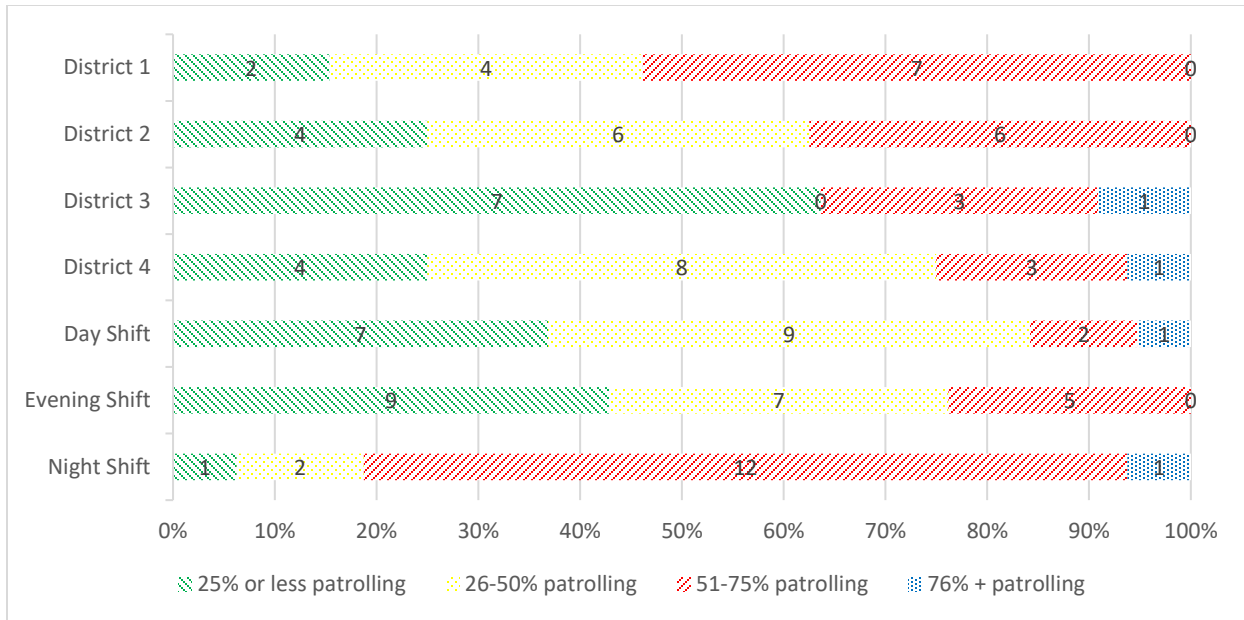


Figure 7. Percentage of officer patrol time by district and shift

### Officers' Use of Discretion

During the interviews, some officers referenced their use of discretion in the enforcement of law or traffic violations. When officers use discretion, they rely on their personal assessment of a situation to determine what course of action will be taken on a traffic stop, in answering a call, or in a self-initiated activity. The ability for officers to use discretion could be considered an expression of the autonomy, mentioned earlier, that officers can experience. Not only can officers decide, to a certain degree, where to be and when, and the type of activities to engage in, but they can also determine what level of enforcement to apply to situations on their beat. Officers' ability to enforce the law as they see fit should be an important consideration in how officers manage their area of responsibility.

Officers spoke of both their attitudes towards discretion and the ways they utilize it. Some officers expressed ideas about being supportive of the "spirit of the law" approach (that is determining the level of violation by focusing on the *intent* of the law rather than the literal interpretation), a recognition that there is not just one way to do things, and that officers function

better when allowed to utilize their discretion. Officers might use a different means for targeted enforcement than suggested by the department or may ignore directives if they feel they are already performing effectively. These officers used their discretion in similar ways as described by Stroschine and colleagues (2008) in their study of informal working rules; that officers will allow informal working rules to dictate their response, based on the officer's perceived degree of seriousness of the offense, whether the officer had engaged in that activity before (for example speeding, or not using a seatbelt), and the offender's demeanor and behavior toward the officer. Discretion was examined in two contexts; first in public contact, reactively when officers make contact with the members of the public during a call for service or proactively during officers' self-initiated field contacts and secondly in traffic enforcement when officers conduct traffic stops for observed violations.

### **Discretion in Public Contact**

Officers used discretion in encounters with the public. Officers used discretion to decide whether to cite them for an offense or in the level of enforcement they employed. For example, the decision to cite for loud parties may depend on the geographic area, or demographics in the area, which might suggest the appropriateness an action. A loud party disrupting a normally quiet neighborhood may warrant a citation but a loud party in a neighborhood of college students may be more expected and accepted given the area, thus being less of a disturbance and only warranting a warning to the partygoers rather than a citation. The decision to cite can be related to the level of problem the behavior might present in the given situation. For example, an officer conducting patrol through a park, may issue citations to disruptive individuals for drinking in the park while a quiet group of softball players having a few beers after the game may not receive citations, only warnings, if the officer even initiated contact at all. This use of discretion is in line



with some officers' comments that the level of law violation will determine the level of officer leniency. If, in the officer's assessment, a situation does not present a serious problem, officers may elect not to take any law enforcement action. For example, after being dispatched to a vehicle in parking lot on suspected marijuana use, one officer (after speaking to the couple and seeing nothing in plain view) chose not to pursue the issue further. Though he suspected they were using marijuana (and could have requested a K9 unit come by) he chose not to as the couple were in transit out of the city and posed no problem.

The level of seriousness of the offense is a factor in officers' utilizing discretion (Black, 1971; Forsyth, 1993). I did not ask officers specifically what metric they used to determine the seriousness of a violation or problem but officers' comments and my observations of a wide variety of interactions suggested officers used the following criteria in determining the seriousness of a problem: the level of risk to public safety, whether other people in the vicinity of the problem may be disturbed by the behavior, or the actual legal level, for example, class of misdemeanor, involved in the behavior, all of which can come into play in how officers determine the seriousness of the offense and utilize their discretion. Another factor in officers' use of discretion is the demeanor of the individual (Black, 1971). If the offender expresses contempt for the law by giving the impression that a warning will not change the offending behavior or the offender will allow it to continue, the officer regards the problem becoming more serious because of the individuals involved.

Officers use their discretion to serve the public, and their own purposes. Officers have chosen to help citizens while off duty and provided them with their cellphone numbers, for more personalized contact, which is a violation of departmental policy. At their discretion, officers might not run a warrant check on minor law violators to avoid possibly having to make a time-

consuming jail run. Officers have also chosen not to cite an individual to possibly develop the person as a source or CI [confidential informant]. As one officer explained, "...I also know from my narcotics experiences, that can come back and really be an aid later for something that's really important to enforce. There's a guy I pulled over, I could have been a dick and hit him with five different things but I maybe wrote him two things, let three of them slide, he remembers me, he trusts me. When he knows of something but doesn't want to be named, he might be able to come to me and I'd be able to find a way to solve a problem without having to get his name into it and he would trust me."

### **Discretion in Traffic Enforcement**

Officers also used discretion in traffic enforcement which entailed decisions regarding when to stop vehicles, when to cite for violations, and the criteria used for those decisions. When officers chose not to stop or cite, as well as amongst all discretionary actions, the action mentioned most often by officers (10%) was the decision not to stop speeders unless they exceed 10 to 20 mph over the limit. This discretionary action may be driven by what officers perceived to be very common place behavior. For example, Officer 53 said, "...and all the people I let go by speeding a little. I wouldn't even start to consider pulling you over unless you're 10 over." A similar sentiment was expressed by Officer 62, "I'll bump it up to where they have to be going 15 over before I'll make a stop just because at least everybody likes to push 10 over."

Officers also felt that they did not need to stop everyone; with so many violators on the street officers had to pick and choose who to stop, and the stops they did choose to make, were intended to serve a deterrent or public safety function. Officer 48 explained, "I don't like making traffic stops just to write citations...If I wanted to write a hundred cites a day I could but I don't wanna write a hundred cites a day. It's not all about numbers to me, its quality. Quality over

quantity.” Officer 41 said, “For me it’s huge, I love speeders around apartment buildings ‘cause there’s little kids running around, there’s no reason for you to be going 10 miles over. I don’t stop anybody for anything under 10 miles over, so in my mind if you’re going that fast, you’re doing it on purpose. You need a ticket.” Some officers also felt that unless the offense was serious they did not have to issue a citation if they could utilize warnings and education in order to maintain good public relations. For example, Officer 37 said, “I haven’t seen a violation egregious enough to me to write a ticket on. Sorry, I’m not gonna write some bullshit ticket just ‘cause you [the department] want me to write tickets.”

Other officers noted that they would not stop or cite for something the officer has done frequently like distracted driving or other minor moving violations, minor equipment violations, or to meet a quota, preferring to write citations that they perceived served a purpose like public safety. For example, one officer said, “I know our administration doesn’t like this, but I don’t like to just go out and say I need to go get five tickets today because I just don’t believe that. I think you can look wherever you want and get tickets but I don’t think it always serves a purpose.”

Officers also use their discretion when witnessing traffic violations and other situations that could warrant their attention while travelling to calls. Whether the officer addresses the observed issue depends on the priority of the call they are responding to and the seriousness of the issue or violation under consideration. Officer 65 explained, in reference to the officer and I stopping to clear debris from the road on the way to a burglar alarm call, “Like that speeder that goes by you when you’re on your way to a call. If it’s a somewhat important call you’re not gonna stop him. You know this alarm [call]—the stuff in the road, you know if a motorcycle hit that he’d probably wipe out so that was more important to me to stop and handle that, then go to

the call [as the officer had determined it was probably a false alarm based on the history of alarm calls at the business].”

When deciding whether to stop and how to cite officers used a variety of criteria. An officer might determine what level of speed in a rolling stop at an intersection will warrant a stop, or use other criteria to determine whether a citation or warning is issued such as the level of violation and driver honesty and attitude, similar to how they deal with the public in other encounters. One officer elaborated on this, “I have a person that if I was going to give a warning to and in my discussion with them I get the feeling that if you give them a warning it’s not in any way going to change this person’s performance in the future, in terms of following the law—this person is there telling me stuff that makes me believe they have nothing but contempt for that law, they’re going to turn around and violate again on the next chance they get, and I will turn around and change my thing [to issuing a citation] whereas it’s very unlikely to go the other way [issuing a warning].” Similar to British officers’ statements about some citizens failing the “attitude test” (Loftus, 2010) another officer expressed a similar view, “And a lot of it goes to, if I treat them with respect, their respectful. And I talk to them, or try to, and I expect them to at least be decent with me. They can talk themselves into more tickets, there’s always that. I’ll tell somebody I warned them for this but cited them for that, but they can get all the cites too if they want to be very disrespectful and be an ass to me when I’m talking to them. They’re probably gonna get more cites.”

Other discretionary actions included deciding whether to cite for the least serious violations in a traffic stop or adjusting the speed violation of a citation, or the way the citation is written, so the driver can avoid large fines. Officers may also utilize discretion in deciding not to cite for all possible violations on a person who appears financially disadvantaged, which differs

from the findings of Black (1971) and Forsyth (1993) who found that offenders of a lower social class were more likely to be sanctioned. Regarding traffic enforcement discretion Officer 67 said, “I mean you could write so many cites for license plates for their tags not being current, no insurance, no driver’s license, along with the speeding you stopped them for or their stoplight violation, you could write so many cites. But for the most part I don't. I'll write a speeding cite and if they don’t have insurance, that’s something that we wanna make sure they do have but if they don’t have their driver’s license, I guess in the X months I've been here I haven't written a cite for someone who didn’t actually have their physical license with them.”

In summary, a large number of factors come into play in how the officers use discretion in a particular situation, including a mix of the officers’ desire for autonomy, demeanor, beliefs, and feelings about the law’s purpose and functionality, the characteristics of the offense or behavior in question, community and departmental expectations, as well as the behavior and attitude of the offender. Officer discretion, and the factors that influence its utilization, makes officer response to any given encounter highly variable. Not all encounters will be viewed the same by every officer as they may assess the combination of factors associated with the encounter differently, which then affects whether and how they employ discretion.

Officer discretion could be viewed as utilizing procedural justice or conversely, as utilizing extra-legal enforcement. With their use of discretion officers can attempt to introduce fairness and understanding to some encounters which can foster police legitimacy as suggested by Sunshine and Tyler (2003). It allows the public to see that officers are not automatons but capable of empathy and open to lowering their level of enforcement dependent on the circumstances of the encounter. However, the discretion that officers use can also be viewed as discriminatory. Kadish (1962) while noting that although eliminating officer discretion may not

be feasible, and discretion may be necessary in instances of overcriminalization, these decisions are “inconsistent with the rule of law in the occasion it creates for inequality in official action, arbitrariness, discrimination, and abuse let alone in its potential for thwarting the legislative goals of crime prevention...” (p. 909). By “giving a break” to some individuals and not others based on their characteristics, or by applying additional sanctions to individuals based on their response to the encounter with the officer, discretion could be viewed by the public as biased or unfair behavior, fostering a perception of police illegitimacy.

## **Beat Integrity**

### **Defining Beat Integrity**

Two concepts regarding officers’ management of their area of responsibility emerged during the interviews that, while both could be considered positive, may also at times be at odds with one another; the concept of *beat integrity*, and the concept of being a team player by *jumping calls*, that is taking a dispatch call not specifically assigned to the officer. Neither of these concepts were known to me prior to data collection and the interview guide did not contain any questions pertaining to the concepts. Both concepts and their interrelatedness come about through the transcript analysis process; as the terms and definitions became apparent, additional coding and analysis was conducted to develop the concepts and their relationship.

While some officers referred to the concept that came to be defined as beat integrity as beat ownership, examination of the concept revealed that beat ownership is a dimension of beat integrity. Beat integrity is a mindset; a way of approaching and understanding your own beat that’s in concert with other officers in the department.

Seventeen officers (29%) made reference to the concept of beat integrity. From officers’ descriptions and mentions of beat integrity three characteristics of the concept were identified;

beat knowledge, beat ownership, and beat work ethic. While they are distinct, these characteristics are also inter-related. If officers have a sense of ownership, then it should stand to reason they should have or want to develop knowledge about their beat and serve their beat through a good work ethic. Wanting to, and being able to, handle your calls effectively and efficiently (good work ethic) is driven by a sense of ownership and facilitated by beat knowledge. Developing beat knowledge is contingent on being involved with and having that sense of ownership and experiencing and handling the types of calls present on the officer's beat.

The first characteristic, beat knowledge, was having knowledge of your beat and a focus—the geographic layout of the beat, who the “problem people” are and where the hotspot and high call volume (“problem”) areas are, and what activities the officer should be or can be engaging in. For example, Officer 66 spoke about the beat knowledge component relating to geographic layout, “For the most part I know the short cuts, that kind of stuff. It is one of the fastest growing beats, a lot on the edges I don't know necessarily by the name or the address. You give me a name and address, if it's a named street some of those I'm not real familiar with however we got the map system which is nice. Other than that, I'm comfortable with business and residential sections. But that's part of beat integrity, you learn it and especially if you're sent there once or twice you're gonna remember it then.” Officer 72 spoke about the aspect of understanding the problems on the beat and what officers should focus on, “I think a lot of it is that beat ownership, beat integrity, beat ownership, all that kind of stuff. This is a problem and if I don't find a way to take care of this problem or issue, I'll have a supervisor telling me this is a problem, let's fix it. So if I can nip it in the bud before it becomes a problem, or gets to the attention of my supervisor, I think I've accomplished my job.”

The second characteristic was having a sense of beat ownership—that the area “belongs” to the officer, they are responsible for what goes on within their beat and are responsible to the citizens and businesses on the beat, as well as wanting to be on their beat and not elsewhere. The concept of beat ownership was mentioned by Mazerolle, Adams, Budz, Cockerill, and Vance (2003) when they examined “beat policing” in Queensland, Australia. They defined “beat policing” as relying “on an intelligence-driven, proactive police response” where officers “are assigned to a defined geographical location and are encouraged to take ownership of that area by responding in a proactive manner to problems within their beat” (p. 1). Officers in the current study also had that sense of beat ownership. For example, Officer 57 said, “I drive my beat and try to keep an eye out for whatever I can and be around so if we do get a call I'm near usually. I usually don't stray far from my beat, it's kinda my responsibility to be around here.” Officer 34 also noted, “I try and stay within my district, I don't usually go to other districts, I just try to work my beat the most, obviously, 'cause it's my beat and I take pride in my beat.” A couple officers said that having assigned beats increased the sense of beat ownership. For example, Officer 66 said, “Talking about beat integrity, it used to be when you didn't know what beat you were gonna be on, you didn't really care about your beat. You'd come to work, take your calls, and that was it. Now you try and be more pro-active, being visible...” This accords with Kane's (2000) study of permanent beats within the context of community oriented policing; he found that officers with permanent beats engaged in more proactive activity, suggesting a sense of increased beat ownership. Some officers also felt that the sense of ownership in beat integrity should extend to district integrity. For example, Officer 50 said,

This isn't my beat but it sure the hell is my district. So talking about responsibility, I'm responsible to my beat and then I'm responsible to my district. I'm not responsible for this other district... I think efficiency for patrol and effectiveness comes down to district ownership. I own my district. We have a lieutenant, three sergeants, and nine police



officers. We own that district. Yes, I will go off my district for a short duty, for an assault, something that's a type one call or activity, that's not what I'm talking about. Ninety-five percent of the day to day we cover, I don't go off my district, I stay within my district, it's my responsibility to make sure—you can call it power shift, power-aid for officers, call it whatever you want but we're meeting the requirement for whatever happens in that district. So we can handle all our calls, all our traffic. The way I see it, we should be a police department within our district.

The third characteristic, beat work ethic, was being able to handle your calls for service—being able to finish your calls and move on to the next without getting overwhelmed with calls and requiring other officers to come over to your beat and take some of your calls. Officer 33 explained, “Also having that beat integrity, having some ownership of what's going on in your area, your calls are your calls, make sure you resolve them, don't push them off on other people. So having that ownership and work ethic.”. Officer 62 also mentioned that desire to handle their own calls, “... at Fargo PD every officer is good at beat integrity. If it's a call on your beat, you might not be the first one there but it's your report, you're taking it. And everybody cares about their beat. If I was busy on something and someone on [Beat] X gets sent to a shoplifter on [officer's beat] Y, I'm like ‘crap, crap, crap’, I wanna take that, it's my responsibility.” Officer 34 also addressed the importance of handling calls on beat and in your district, “Other officers do this as well, if you hear on the radio when people from other districts are getting sent to your district, you try to cancel them because when you start crossing like that, and we're travelling further distances, and then it backs up everybody, ‘cause then our response time is slower, so now you clear that up and you try to go to a call in your district where now you're way out in another district, so that slows us down. So that's an inefficiency issue also.”

Beat integrity acts as a set of informal work rules for officers as to how they should manage their area of responsibility. It is an expectation for officers themselves that they feel a sense of ownership and have knowledge of their beat, and are determined to “work” their beat

the best way they can. It is the way they believe a patrol officer should manage their work environment. It requires them to be self-sufficient, motivated, and knowledgeable and officers have that expectation of themselves as well as expecting it from other officers.

### **Challenges to Beat Integrity**

While the concept of beat integrity seemed important and useful to officers, they also faced challenges to that beat integrity. Situations and circumstances could make keeping and establishing beat integrity difficult, including having to engage in assigned tasks, changing beat assignments (exacerbated by short staffing on the shift), and heavy call volume.

While one officer mentioned that assigned tasks, for example CSI (crime scene investigation), take away from officers' beat integrity, eight of the 17 officers that spoke of beat integrity mentioned feeling a loss of beat integrity when being called to or assigned to a different beat. Officer 50 mentioned how during a time in the department without assigned beats, beat integrity suffered, "When I first got here we weren't doing COPs and you got assigned a different beat every day, you were all over the place. They had no ownership, no real knowledge of that beat, or that area 'cause they're all over hell. It's totally ineffective but because I work in the same area every day, it's nice to have those communications, it's nice to have the crime reporting statistics thing but the biggest thing is I'm out here."

Situations, however, would arise where officers are assigned or dispatched off their normal beat. Some officers noted the rotating shift structure allowed for officers to occasionally be assigned to other beats. Beats that are not assigned an officer must be covered by other officers and officers can be moved off their beat to cover an open one. Officer 36 explained, "Generally speaking, on each shift there's two officers assigned to each beat but you're generally opposite of each other so on my Monday and Friday [Officer Y] and I work [our same beat], so if

were short, I'm gonna get bumped [moved] off my beat [to cover an open beat] so you lose that sense of ownership. It's like that's my area, that's where I work, I don't wanna go over there, I wanna be over here." As one officer noted, "[Officer X] and I are responsible for taking calls on our beats as well as [Beat Y]. And there's also no [Beat X] car so that's left open, and that's the beat we're close to, so it's going to be—dispatch will...the right answer would be is to send us. The problem is it's not our district and it's not our area of responsibility, it's not an area we focus patrol on, things like that so when we get sent over there to work it frustrates us when we have to go over to focus on issues that aren't related to our area." While noting that staffing problems contributed to a loss of beat integrity, this officer recognized that having to assign or dispatch officers to a different beat was necessary to serve the public need, "And the whole idea of patrolling your own beat and your own sector just goes out the window 'cause you're just getting pulled over to help other people on their beats. But, that's what you gotta do when you don't have enough people. You can't keep people waiting forever. I know if I call the cops I don't wanna wait an hour and half for them to get there. And I see that happens pretty frequently."

Calls for service volume may also dictate that officers are pulled away from their beats to assist other officers or to focus on problem areas on other beats. One officer explained,

Beat X is a humungous beat. Beat X is on the [direction] edge of town and I'm constantly getting sucked downtown, they need staffing downtown, they got problems downtown. Last night I spent—I think I did one traffic stop on my beat last night and the rest I was pretty much downtown... my former lieutenant, you could say he was pretty much willing to take a hit on crime increase on Beat X if by me spending all my time during the first half of the shift, on Friday nights and Saturday nights downtown, to help them reduce crime on Beat 11 which is downtown. Sooo, that's what he wanted, so that's what we did. I don't always feel an obligation that my beat is my beat and (inaudible) than downtown.

While officers had to contend with assigned tasks, short staffing, and call volume as a challenge to establishing and keeping beat integrity, another factor existed, the desire to engage

in, and practice of, jumping calls, which could influence officers' perception and understanding of beat integrity.

### **Jumping Calls**

The underlying concept of beat integrity is beat and, in some instances, district management. The desire and ability to manage an area of responsibility, both for their own benefit, and for the benefit of other officers, can prompt officers to "jump calls". Officers, based on their own awareness, or the dispatch screen in the car terminal, identify that an officer, usually on a different beat in their district, is falling behind in answering calls. Officers referred to falling behind in your calls for service with terms such as calls are "stacked", "getting buried", or "getting slammed". The observing officer would then "jump" a call, that is take the call themselves, that was dispatched to the officer falling behind. The observing officer would radio in and request dispatch to assign the call to them. This officer then leaves their beat and proceeds to the location of the jumped call.

I witnessed a strong sense of solidarity amongst officers and they try to demonstrate this support by being a "team player" and helping out other officers. For example, Officer 45 related this during the interview process:

Participant: ...a lot if you're gonna have two beats to patrol. Just remember that you're gonna want guys to help you.

Interviewer: So you gotta show, in a sense, that you're a team player...

Participant: Oh it's about being a team, absolutely. You don't wanna be the guy that's not helping out, you don't wanna let a district partner have three reports holding and you not help him out, it's just not ok as a district partner. You'll see guys who check the call logs, we got a District 2 guy down in (inaudible), we just got one call but he's a District 2 guy so I wanna make sure he doesn't get dogged with reports. He helps me out a lot, we go on a lot of calls together, so I try and be mindful if he's out of the district.

Jumping calls sometimes occurs when officers are looking for action or trying to gain experience with different types of calls, though it more typically occurs because officers are trying to help their busy beat and district partners manage an area of responsibility. For example, Officer 16 said, “Basically I jump a lot of runs, might not get assigned a lot, but I jump a lot just ‘cause it’s not fair the guy downtown gets 30 calls and I get two, you know, so if I can I’ll jump calls. I probably jumped five or six yesterday.” Another officer expressed a similar view of trying to make a fair distribution of work, “On day shift, anyway, there’s a group of us who are pretty good if people are busy and getting blasted, you jump calls for service to get things done or help ‘em out or you end up with five reports and nobody [else] was doing anything all day. Maybe you take some of the reports or calls for service for them, ‘cause you know they’re working on reports.” Officers typically get behind in answering their calls because of call volume, or the complexity of calls and the time involved in handling them. One officer explained,

And it’s not just calls for service on my beat. [adjoining beat] has one of the highest calls for service, you have complex calls, a lot of domestics, fights, thefts, tons of shoplifters ‘cause of [a local mall]. Call volume kinda puts you out there. If there’s a night where he’s getting multiple shoplifters, he gets bogged down, and I’ll go and back him up just ‘cause we take care of each other in my sector [district]. If he’s getting his butt slammed, I’m gonna go up there and help him out and try to alleviate some of his work load. And he does the same thing for me.”

### **Conflict Between Beat Integrity and Jumping Calls**

There were indications that the concept of beat integrity and the practice of jumping call did not always mesh smoothly. Some of the responses indicated that a few officers felt certain officers exhibited what might be characterized as low beat integrity and took advantage of other officers’ willingness to jump calls. Though I did not observe this behavior, it was reported that these officers may be slow in doing their work, or slow to respond to calls they do not like,

knowing that if they get too swamped with calls, other officers will help them out. Therefore, they allow other officers to jump calls on their beat, thus avoiding their own work. One officer explained,

Now on the flip side of that not every patrol officer is willing to put that effort in [establishing beat integrity]. You need to have buy-in from the patrol officers, the patrol officer has to take ownership of the problem or trying to solve the problem. And sometimes that takes a lot of effort to get that, sometimes it doesn't, sometimes you have officers who're 'Great, I want to do my job, I wanna work hard, I wanna do this' and sometimes you have officers who are lazy, I'm not going to sugarcoat it. I mean there's people who don't wanna do this job, they wanna come here, sit and drive around in their car all day and then go home and not take a report, not take a call, and the people—and sometimes the crime statistics in their beat show because of that.

Another officer expressed a similar sentiment noting how officers with low beat integrity negatively affected the other officers working, "I think taking the calls, doing what you need for the call and clearing the scene for the next call to help your—otherwise you end up screwing your beat partners. And there's people that will milk a call, they'll take forever and it's like, really? You got like five calls stacked up on your beat and we're gonna get sent to them. I'm right in the middle of [Beat X] and [Beat Y]. So if something happens on Y and I'm not doing something, and they need two cars, I'm going. If something is happening on X and they need two cars, I'll go. So I get pulled both ways so if you milk those calls out people get pissed off at you."

It was more common, however, for officers to state that certain officers may have very high beat integrity. These officers were characterized as tending to refrain from jumping calls on the other beats because it detracted from their beat integrity by leaving their beat open; nor did they appreciate other officers jumping calls on their beat as it suggested they were losing beat integrity. For example, one officer said, "Usually I jump around beats, when we're busy I like to go to other districts and help out. I get bored real easy. Some people frown on that, they don't like you going into their beats which I can understand why but I guess it's good and bad."

Officer 66 elaborated further, “Like we were talking earlier about helping other officers out in your district. There are people that are so beat oriented that they won’t help another person in their district unless they’re dispatched to do it or (inaudible) come help. Which I can understand the beat integrity but if you're getting your butt handed to you, you want someone to come and help. If you’re not busy on your beat you should kinda turn that beat integrity into district integrity.”

One problem mentioned by officers, and one that can occur in the dispatch process when staffing levels are low as well, is a cascading effect from jumping calls. When officers took calls on other beats, their assigned beat is then left open, which may require a different officer to cover that beat. Officer 54 commented on this cascading effect, ‘Cause inevitably what seems to happen is it creates a domino effect because they'll pull officers from another district and then they get a call out there that needs attention right away so they're pulling officers from other districts, it’s almost comical ‘cause you'll see officers from other districts all over town ‘cause of this cascading effect.”

Cascading can occur on occasions where call volume is heavy or officers engage in injudicious call jumping, leaving officers engaged in activities or answering calls on unfamiliar beats, and a lack of beat integrity on this new beat reduces their effectiveness in their activities. I witnessed this cascading effect on a few occasions where officers were dispatched off their district and while engaged in the call, another call comes into the beat the officer just left, requiring someone else from a different beat to take that call. This can become frustrating for officers as not only did they feel the loss of beat integrity but it gave a sense of disorganization to their activities. This frustration was especially evident when officers were dispatched to drive a lengthy distance to a call in an unfamiliar district. The extra time involved answering that call by

dispatching a distant officer, especially on a busy night, suggested to the officer that the dispatch process was unorganized and inefficient, and that it would likely result in some other officer now having to take a call on their beat. One officer half-jokingly predicted that as soon as we arrived at the call destination on the other side of town, a call would come in on his beat, and he was correct.

To ensure they do not become entangled in a jumped call that prevents them from attending to the calls on their own beat, officers must be able to negotiate and balance the expectation of being a team player with that of beat integrity, take into account other officers' feelings regarding their beat integrity, and account for call volume. This balancing act affects how officers patrol and what activities they engage in while on patrol, to insure they are open to assist other officers quickly if need be, or whether they may even jump a call. Officers might not invest themselves too heavily in any particular activity when the potential and need for jumping calls, or being dispatched on some occasions, might require the officer to break away from that activity.

A District 2 officer noted the practicality of being available and geographically close to areas they may be called to, "Really we're a North car, so a lot of our calls we spend on District 1. I take a lot of calls on District 1 so I'll rarely go down to District 2, I spend a lot of time helping these guys. It would leave them short if I spent a lot of time down there, so my patrol is kinda beat specific and I won't roam as much as probably other beats do, down south, other parts of the district [2] like [Beat X] or [Beat Y]. I won't roam down there 'cause downtown's pretty busy and like you said when you get a two-car run, two cars go there and it's too busy of a district for me to be all the way down in 21 when he needs help up north."



Officer 36 mentioned this practicality aspect as well as the expectations of other officers, “I think patrol feeds off of what everyone else is doing now, so we have a lot of cars tied up on stuff right now so I'll stay closer to downtown ‘cause it doesn’t make sense for me to go all the way up in my beat just to get sent all the way back down again. Especially when you're down to just two or three [officers], you're not all looking for traffic stops, you're staying available. ‘Cause you don't be *that guy*, who's out busting T-stops while everybody else is humping calls.”

Officer 44 also referenced the expectation of other officers, and the public, that officers be available to help answer calls, “If every beat is busy, and I'm not getting a single call and I'm out running traffic, that’s probably not-it's going to be frowned upon, if I'm running traffic and everybody's getting slammed with reports, ‘cause I should be helping them out. ‘Cause those are priorities, helping other community members who are calling for our help. We have to help them.” Negotiating this balance may be difficult at times and for some officers there might be a steep learning curve which can change their view or approach to patrol. Officer 67 related how negotiating this balance affected his outlook.

Some officers have extreme beat integrity, extreme district integrity. I'm not really one of those officers where no matter what I'm not letting another officer take a call on my beat if I can help it. Or if a call comes out to my area or district and I'm free, I'll help out as I can but I have more of a team wide mentality and the districts and beats have more of a district mentality which is department wide for the most part. I was reassigned to District 2 one night and I’m used to my beat where I patrol and a call came out on the next district over but only a couple blocks away so I went and helped out. Well another call came on my beat and I was asked to clear that call in the middle of an interview and afterwards I took a little bit of flak for that. Someone drove past that call [on my beat] to take that [call], the one I was on, because it was their beat and I didn’t really understand all that, so it changed a little how I patrol, help out less in different districts in the areas so I can be available for calls that come out on mine. I don’t really agree with that; I would rather work more team wide but officers from different districts are coming across to help me take calls so I understand why they feel the way they do. But I don’t necessarily agree with it so that changed a little bit of how I approach it.

Officers incorporate the concept of beat integrity, and its three characteristics, beat knowledge, beat ownership and beat work ethic, into how they believe proper management of their area of responsibility should be performed. Officers expressed wanting to have beat integrity, and an understanding that officers expect it of them and they expected it of other officers. However, the degree that officers invest in the concept of beat integrity could vary and beat integrity may run afoul of another concept, the shared responsibility and teamwork that prompts officers to jump calls. Both of these concepts take on the form of informal work rules, which influence officer behavior and are viewed as effective and meaningful, as suggested by Strohshine and colleagues (2008); there was an expectation among the patrol officers that the concepts were accepted and engaged in, and officers who failed to understand or participate in these work concepts were viewed negatively, as they did not demonstrate self-reliance or a desire to be a team player.

## **PATROLLING WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF LIMITATIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES**

Much of how officers approach and view their beat and what officers do to manage their beats were defined by the officers themselves. How officers serve the purposes they believe exist, their goals, preferences, discretion, and their own experiences on the beat act as a template or methodology in how they want to do their jobs and manage their area of responsibility. The environment in which they do their jobs can present both limitations and opportunities in the use of their methodology, as has already been briefly referred to by officers in the preceding pages. The beat and shift, as the officers' environment, requires officers to manage or alter what they do on patrol to accommodate or take advantage of the limitations and opportunities the beat and shift present.

### **Beat Characteristics**

Four districts divide the study city into 12 beats. Based on their assessment of call volume in 2010, in 2011 the department reconfigured the beats and districts, changing from three districts to four, essentially adding three beats for a total of twelve (See Figures 1-5). Officers viewed each beat as having its own set of characteristics, and its own set of problems, requiring its own patrol approach. Beat 11 is a small, busy beat that generates quality of life issues stemming from homeless problems and a number of liquor establishments. Beat 12 handles emergency room issues, has a lot of schools, and is frequently called to Beat 11 for assistance and two car runs. Beat 13 is very large, adjacent to a university, has industrial and undeveloped areas as well as a mix of residential area types, some of which are only infrequently patrolled. Beat 13 officers are frequently called down to Beat 11 as well; otherwise, some officers said, the beat would be quiet.

Beat 21 has a mix of major traffic thoroughfares, older single-family homes and apartment areas, along with some businesses. Beat 22 has some older neighborhoods and a centralized problem area. Weekdays are slow but officers are called down to adjacent Beat 11 on the weekends frequently. Beat 23 is large and is considered a north side beat, with localized problem areas and college issues.

Beat 31 tends to have a high call volume every day and contains a mix of businesses and residential areas. Beat 32 has older, well established neighborhoods that are low in crime. Beat 33 is a large beat that's low in crime and has higher SES neighborhoods. Beat 33 officers often are tasked with wide ranging District 3 coverage of calls and patrol as Beats 31 and 32 are usually dispatched together on calls, leaving Beat 33 to cover the district.

Beat 41 is large with a mix of residential, industrial, and businesses with some major traffic thoroughfares. The beat has virtually no bars so officers will shift toward Beat 42 at bar close time every night. Beat 42 is large, busy, has some major traffic thoroughfares, and some residential areas but also large areas of retail businesses, bars, and restaurants. Beat 43 is very large, with mainly newer residential areas and few businesses. It has low call volume but is growing in size with many new construction areas.

### **Shift Characteristics**

At the time of the study the department utilized three 10-hour shifts. The department changed from 8-hour shifts to 10-hour shifts in 2012. The day shift runs from 7:15 a.m. to 5:15 p.m., the evening shift runs from 4:30 p.m. to 2:30 a.m., and the night shift runs from 10:45 p.m. to 7:45 a.m. These times include the briefing period which typically lasts approximately 15 minutes.

Day shift officers described the day shift as having a different dynamic, with no real need to be anywhere unless dispatched to a call; the exception to this was performing COPs at school zones [referring to officers positioning themselves within the school zone, close to the school, before class to provide a presence and deter speeding] during the school year. The shift was more reactive than proactive and had less violent crime than evening or night shifts. Day officers tended to take the reports for crimes like burglaries and thefts that occurred over night. Officers said they tended to come in contact with more “normal” people and that it was harder to pick out suspicious individuals because of the greater amount of activity and traffic that occurred during the day. Officers also described neighborhood patrol as being more for community contact than for deterrence as there was little criminal activity that might be deterred by officer presence during the day. Day shift tended to start out slow with call volume increasing around Noon, keeping officers busy until the end of their shift.

Evening shift officers described the shift as always busy. Typically, evening officers had calls holding for them when they left briefing or were dispatched shortly after briefing. Officers often described spending their shift running from call to call. Though evening officers said that they rarely had contact with day shift officers, they frequently come in contact with night shift officers as they were often dispatched together during the shift overlap. Evening shift officers also noted it was easier to do traffic enforcement on the shift as they can take advantage of rush hour, if call volume did not prevent them from working traffic.

Night shift officers described the shift as busy. They were typically dispatched right out of briefing and stayed busy until early morning. Officers said they had little community contact after 3:00 a.m. and the people they usually came in contact with were “problem” people. Night shift officers said the shift was more self-initiated rather than call driven like day and evening

shifts and they often focused on looking for prowlers. Night shift officers also said that it was difficult to address or solve certain problems because the hours on night shift limited access to certain resources like social services and landlords.

### **Shifting and Competing Expectations for Beat and Shift**

The shift and beat they serve can figure greatly into whether and how officers meet departmental expectations. Some officers noted that department expectations tend to be varied and shifting in priority. One week the department may express a desire for officers to focus on traffic enforcement if citations are down but shift priorities the following week when a string of break-ins pushes the department to have officers search for prowlers. If a new issue arises the week after that, the department will again request officers to shift their focus to this new priority. One officer said this ever-changing number one priority was viewed disparagingly by officers,

It's almost comical because at any one point in time I think we have three or four number one priorities and they change so quickly. Just up until a month ago, we were told every day I had to get to Oak Valley [apartment area] and you needed to call out that you were COP at least once a shift, be out walking around and you were supposed to do that there and I was supposed to call it out once a day. And then do it at Rivercrest [city park] and call it out and it was something that was checked. And again, then something came up and they didn't think we were getting enough tickets. So all of a sudden, the problem didn't change or disappear, we just didn't need to be doing that when they want us to be focusing more on tickets. So everyone jokes that you go on vacation and then you have to come back and figure out what's our priority this week.

Officer 33 expressed a similar sentiment regarding the competing priorities that officers routinely manage, "My sergeant may want me to do the COP stuff at the hotel, maybe that's his goal, his primary thing, that thing he wants me to do no matter what. The lieutenant who's getting talked to by the chief or whatever, because our tickets are down, wants me to focus on the ticket thing and at some point there has to be some give and take, you can't make everybody happy so you need to get on the same page as to what the focus is going to be."

Officers recognized that some expectations are applicable generally while some are specific. For example, officers understood the department generally expected them to be consistent and active while on duty and focus patrol and traffic enforcement efforts in appropriate areas. Though officers may consider some activities like traffic enforcement as a general expectation, sergeants or administration may also specifically instruct officers to engage in or intensify an activity like that, which often took the form of formal verbal or written directives. The most frequently mentioned expectation that was both generally and specifically expected was that officers work traffic and write citations. Officers said that the department has a performance standard (some say quota) of 20 to 25 traffic citations a month per officer. Opinions varied as to how difficult it was to meet that standard but one of the frequently mentioned daily goals of officers of writing one to two citations per shift would meet the departmental performance standard. Some officers disliked the idea of a quota as one officer angrily noted, “We used to have quotas, they all claimed we didn’t have quotas, but when they tell you they want 20 cites a month as a performance expectation, it’s still a freakin’ quota.” Other officers, like Officer 28, said having a quota conflicts with the officer’s own work priorities and focuses for their shift, “In reality, it doesn’t sound like a huge goal or expectation, right? The reality is if I’m four or five reports behind, that’s the last thing I worry about is writing traffic tickets.”

Officers were also expected to show a presence in school zones for a deterrent effect on traffic at the start and end of the school day, do COPs or make contact with the public in some way, do park checks and bar walk-throughs, log into departmental intelligence, do sex offender checks, and make field contacts.

In understanding how officers manage their area of responsibility it is important to recognize that while the department has these general and specific expectations for officers, the

specific beat and shift characteristics can attenuate some of those expectations. While every officer is expected to produce traffic citations it is easier to obtain those citations when the beat contains more major traffic thoroughfares and other features that generate and maintain traffic activity. For example, District 4 beats contain multiple major thoroughfares and retail and entertainment businesses which provide more opportunities for traffic enforcement and citations than a small residential beat closer to downtown. Different shifts also determine when traffic enforcement is conducted. Day shift officers try to take advantage of the morning rush hour, evening shift officers focus on the end of day rush and early evening, while night shift officers try to hit traffic earlier in the shift because the opportunity to run traffic effectively decreases sharply as the shift goes on.

Being able to meet some expectations is contingent upon the presence of features on the beat like parks, bars, and sex offenders. However, being able to do COPS, or meet with the public, or make field contacts is more contingent on the shift. As noted by day shift officers, the level of activity during the day makes it more difficult to identify individuals that might warrant a field contact. Day shift officers have the opportunity to do COPs at businesses on their beat as well as make community contacts with citizens that serve as public relations. Conversely, night shift officers note that they did not get to deal much with “normal” people. By the time night shift officers come on, much of the citizenry are at home. While night shift officers can do COPS at any 24-hour businesses on their beats, much of their public contact occurs through field contacts made for investigative purposes rather than for public relations. Being able to meet other expectations like sex offender checks on the night shift depends on having the time available early in the shift before it gets to be too late at night. Evening shift tends to be the busiest shift but evening shift officers also have the most expectations that need to be fulfilled.



The public is available for both positive community contacts and field contacts, parks are open and bars are busy enough to warrant a check, and there is enough vehicle traffic that cites can be obtained more easily.

Officers do have some limited ability to determine their beat and shift assignment and thus provide the opportunity to themselves to engage in preferential work. According to Deputy Chief Anderson, the department moved away from randomly assigned beats in 1999, and toward beat and shift assignments allocated by an annual bidding process. Officers put in “bids” for particular “lines”, that is, signing up for specific beats and a specific shift on those beats, and considered the features of beats and shifts, as well as their own preferences, when they have the opportunity to “bid for a line”. Lines are awarded based on seniority and no beat is protected. For example, if an officer with six years of experience has been working the same line for the past five years, and a more senior officer bids that same line, the less senior officer will lose it to the more senior officer.

Officers try to bid lines depending on who they may have a chance to work with as a beat or district partner as well as whether it allows them to exercise their patrol preferences. If an officer prefers running traffic and catching DUIs, an evening shift in District 4, which has more thoroughfares, might better suit that officer’s preferences than Beat 13 which has fewer main roads and liquor establishments. If an officer likes hunting warrants and catching offenders, an evening shift on Beat 22, with its lower SES population, would provide more of those opportunities than would a District 4 beat with many retail businesses. For officers who like making positive community contacts in the neighborhoods, bidding a day shift on Beats 12 or 13 allows them to do that easier than bidding the night shift on those same beats. If an officer likes

to hunt for prowlers, bidding a night shift on beats with more residential areas or those with industrial and storage areas allows them to do so more easily.

Family related preferences also affected officers' choices in bidding lines. Veteran and established officers typically have first choice of shifts. As these officers got older, they married and began to establish families and as their experience level grew so did their ability to take day shifts that allowed them to spend more time with their families, experience a slower pace at work, or allowed them to experience a more "normal" work schedule.

Beat and shift characteristics, can provide opportunities and limitations for officers as they try to meet goals, express preferences, and meet expectations. Being able to manage the characteristics of their work environment to accomplish what they need to do, and want to do is integral to their larger mandate of managing their area of responsibility. Some factors, however, are more difficult to contend with and actually form what officers consider as obstacles to effective patrolling.

### **Obstacles to Effective Patrolling**

Officers were asked about what kind of things inhibit, or become an obstacle or roadblock to the officer engaging in, or being effective on patrol or, in other words, the things that make their job more difficult to accomplish. An important part of understanding officers' ability to manage their area of responsibility is identifying what officers consider as inhibitors to their ability to patrol. Officers may need to find a way to manage these obstacles, or mitigate their effects, if officers are to be effective and efficient on patrol. Officers identified a broad scope of 38 different types of obstacles and these were categorized into four themes; *environment*, *work*, *department*, and the *public*. Some specific obstacles under these themes like staffing and call volume will be examined in more detail.

## **Environment Related Obstacles**

Environment related obstacles were associated with city, beat, and shift characteristics. Only a few officers mentioned issues such as beat size, low traffic activity, and city policies being too accommodating to what officers referred to as problem people as examples of environmental obstacles. With the study city in a period of growth, road construction, traffic flow, and road design were issues some officers identified as challenges to traffic enforcement. For example, Officer 32 said, “But it’s not realistic out here on W avenue and Q street, there's no good place to park, slowing traffic down there. It's very difficult to run traffic and the red-light violations there, there’s no good place to park and when you pull out after them there’s so much traffic it’s difficult to go after them.” Another officer also noted how environmental design inhibited traffic enforcement, “For patrol purposes, what it comes down to is the physical structure of how the city is laid out. A prime example is on F street when they rebuilt it, but one of the things they did in hindering my job is the extensive length of medians where it actually becomes a barrier if I need to turn around on somebody. I mean I have to go faster than I probably should to turn around and then I gotta go faster to catch up to the car I’m looking for. And sometimes I completely lose them because of their speed or whatever it may be...”

## **Work Related Obstacles**

Work related obstacles had to do with specific work activities that officers had to engage in during the course of their shift. Paperwork, reports, and follow-ups were the most frequently mentioned obstacles that officers experienced. Production of reports and follow-ups needed to be done in a timely manner and these typically had a high priority in officers’ workdays. Officer 31 discussed how the volume of paperwork detracts from time to patrol, “So many officers are taken off the street, all around the country and here, everywhere, ‘cause paperwork and stuff officers

are required to do has just gotten to be outrageous. It's hard to just be a beat officer these days, all this paperwork, paperwork, it's just more and more and more. It shouldn't be that difficult of a job but the paperwork makes it more difficult and that's where you get your officers off the street." As patrol officers were tasked with a good deal of the investigative legwork on cases, follow-up paperwork on the cases can be seen as an obstacle and source of frustration as noted by this officer, "Well it seems like we get a lot of reports back for follow up which takes away from patrol. And some of these are just so ridiculous, in some of our opinions anyway. Like really? Why are you sending this back?"

Some officers also felt that the inability to maintain beat integrity as well as COPs, traffic enforcement, an increased workload, and having to utilize a marked car could serve as obstacles. Officers recognized that having a marked car increased visibility, and with that visibility comes driver awareness and deterrence. When drivers are all obeying the law because an officer is seen in their vicinity, it becomes difficult for officers to find a violator to stop.

### **Department Related Obstacles**

Departmental related obstacles involved departmental policies, directives, assigned tasks, or work conditions that the department may have control over. In this particular theme, the scope of the types of obstacles expanded greatly to include 21 different types. Frequently mentioned examples included assigned duties and tasks (22%), squad car usage and availability (14%), and departmentally mandated reporting requirements (10%). The most frequently mentioned obstacle under this theme, however, was staffing issues, with 37% of the officers stating this was an obstacle to patrolling.

**Staffing.** Officers identified the level of staffing and how well staff is maintained as influential in officers' ability to patrol effectively. The department determined minimum staffing

levels as ten officers per shift on the weekdays and 12 officers per shift on the weekends. At the minimum weekday staffing level, two of the beats in the city are left uncovered. Officers frequently mentioned, and I noted as well, that the shifts frequently ran at or below minimum, especially on weekdays.

Officers mentioned a number of ways that staffing affects their performance and patrolling. By leaving beats unstaffed, other officers must patrol those unassigned, and possibly unfamiliar, beats and take those calls as well as their own. For example, Officer 18 said, "...if it's a busy night, or a normal night, and you have low staffing, you'll have to pick up the calls for other beats and stuff like that, you're more busy than you normally would so it does take away from patrol." Some officer said that low staffing affected the purposes that were trying to be served by patrol. For example, this officer said, "I think it would be much more efficient if we had a lot more cars out on patrol. There are some nights this large beat of X, where there might not be anybody on X, assigned to it, so if I'm on [Beat] Y and we just don't have the staffing it's a lot harder for me to cover Y and X and feel that I've shown enough presence for people to go 'Oh the police are out, they're looking for people up to no good'. Definitely [we need] more people, more cars."

Short staffing limited the ability of officers to work together on self-initiated activities like traffic blitzes (a focused effort by multiple officers to address a particular traffic issue or location), Officer 33 said, "With our staffing, when school's going on, we wouldn't be able to do these things 'cause we don't have the people but today in briefing they mentioned that we have the school resource officers on the street now, we can utilize them for a blitz, which we've done in the past many times when we have the staff. Today, actually pulling the trigger on it [initiating

the traffic blitz], was our choice. We are the lucky one of the districts that has four people rather than three, so we have the extra manpower to do that.”

With short staffing, some officers said they felt overworked, that there were few opportunities to take a personal day, and consequently their work suffered as morale decreased and they started to burnout. Officer 48 noted that as the stresses on the job increase because of short staffing, so does that desire for officers to take a sick day, which exacerbates short staffing, “It’s like the next couple hours are gonna be tied up in this and when I’m done with this I’m gonna get hammered with something else so it’s like we had a lot of people doing the ‘I need a mental day’, which that adds up, kinda rolling over, it ripples into patrol. You get a guy short, two guys short, and everybody else is getting hammered and then you get the next guy who’s gonna call in sick. It kinda ripples through.”

*Officers’ perceptions of, and remedies for, short staffing.* The frustration that officers expressed with short staffing was evident throughout their comments. Some officers commented that the Fargo police department was below the national average in police officers per capita<sup>12</sup> and that some situations could result in a reduced number of officers being available to serve the public. Officer 50 said,

...it’s obvious to everyone who works in our department that ten [officers] is not enough. Would it be more efficient to say the minimum is 14 and have four beats doubled up, there’s at least four cars that dispatch can pick from to go on calls that we would call two car runs? I don’t know because I can’t even tell you the last time we were truly at full staff. And even when we’re full staff we’re still understaffed for the size of the city and what we need. Right now we have ten officers on the street. If the shit hits the fan like it did last week when we had that shooting [officers were fired upon by, and then killed, an armed robbery suspect], six to eight of us are gonna be tied up in that. Eight, you mean

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<sup>12</sup> According to Crime in the United States (FBI, 2015) the national average of licensed police officers per capita, for a city the size of Fargo in 2015, was 1.7 per 1000 while Fargo’s per capita rate was 1.3 per 1000. The national average of licensed police officers per capita for all cities was 2.1 officers per 1000.

80% of your workforce is off the street now. And we'll call people in but that can take an hour, two hours...

Officers said that the department has failed to effectively handle the staffing problem.

One officer said, "I would say the biggest one [obstacle] is staffing probably. I know that's something the department has worked on, of course some aspects are out of the department's hands. They can't always control who comes and goes and when they do that, but that, to me, has the biggest impact because if we have every beat staffed, and I have to worry about just my beat, I'd definitely have more time. If we only have, let's say, one guy on District 4, and I'm basically covering all three beats, then I'm just responding to calls." Another officer also stressed the department's culpability in the staffing problem,

I think another thing is the lack of people. We're so short on staff. The more people you have on the street—our bare minimum is ten for patrol and then you got a supervisor, a minimum of one supervisor and there's days that people are sick so you're down to where they're constantly calling people for overtime to try and fill it. We're just so short and I think that's a huge roadblock for efficiency. If you had numbers for the population, like the national average, and had the right number of officers for that population, that would make a big difference but we don't have that. We've been short forever since a couple of years after I started. We've been hiring people constantly. Yeah, I think that's a big roadblock for that.

As Officer 33 mentioned, school resource officers were pulled out of the schools in an attempt by the administration to alleviate short staffing within the patrol ranks. However, this officer noted some of the discord generated within the department as the administration attempted to address the staffing issue but failed to relieve the staffing problem:

Yeah, since our staffing went down they took everybody out of their special details and special spots, investigations, school resource officers, and that was a big issue with the media and the public, taking cops out of schools. And then our TSU [traffic safety unit] guys were taken off the street which made our [citation] numbers go down (snorts)—took a nosedive. All the investigators that got switched or moved and they gotta take a patrol officer and then our lieutenants and sergeants, and deputy chiefs, and everybody getting moved around, by the time somebody gets out of the PTO program they're already spoken for, and it's definitely not patrol they're going to. They gotta fill up their spots, gotta make everybody else happy—where you put in for a special position and you get

ripped out of it. What was the point of being put in that special position in the first place? Kinda take everybody and put them back in their spots and we're the last to get our bodies so you gotta hump it until we get the extra people I guess.

Officers had ideas on how to alleviate staffing issues, such as employing two officers per beat, adding 10 to 30 more officers, increasing the patrol force by 50%, and raising weekday minimums to 12 or 14 officers per shift. However, officers also noted that adding officers is a long process. The training period takes months and some trainees may fail to make it through the training program. Some officers, like the officer noted above, said, it seemed when new officers were added, other patrol officers moved into different divisions, were assigned different duties, or moved up through promotion to fill spots in the chain of command, so the actual increase in patrol officers on the street was small.

**Assigned duties and tasks.** Some of the other more frequently mentioned departmental obstacles included special assignments like K-9, CSI (crime scene investigation), DRE (drug recognition expert), bike patrol, or other assignments and assigned tasks. Patrol officers receive training in different fields, tasks and areas like these and while on patrol duty they are called upon to carry out these specialized tasks and duties as necessary. For example, there were no dedicated CSI personnel. If a CSI technician was needed for an incident, whichever patrol officer with CSI training that was on the shift was tasked with those duties. K-9 officers conducted regular patrol duties and took calls for service until their canine was needed. Once trained, these are permanent designations for those officers and the daily shift roll call sheet indicated which officers have the particular designations. Additionally, officers may be tasked by a sergeant or the administration with other special assignments such as coordinating a community event or setting up a traffic study. All of these special assignments, duties, and tasks are on top of officers' patrol duties and need to be accomplished during their shift time. Twenty-two percent



of officers said these assignments and tasks (some which could require an extended period of time on the shift) took officers away from proactive patrolling. One officer said, “There was two nights of my week that I was the only CSI on. So if somebody has an assault, I’m on [Beat] X, I had to go to [emergency room] on the other side of town, now you’re really talking about getting hunkered down or whatever you want to call it, with other things, [and] not patrolling.”

In reference to myself and officers searching the riverbank for a dead body earlier in the shift, Officer 43 stated, “There’s times where it [assignments like CSI] can be a big factor in what you’re doing. Let’s say we would have found a dead body down at the river, we’d have been down there for hours and then with the CSI duty, we’d have been down there for hours taking pictures, waiting for the coroner to show up, things like that and then when your done with that, you still have to log your pictures into the system, so that’s a lot of time. CSI is pretty time intensive.” Another officer also noted the preparation and extra time required for some additional duties, “I’m a DT [defensive tactics] instructor as well as a training officer so there’s a lot of paperwork, planning, writing of lesson plans, things like that that go into that. That takes away a lot of patrol time.”

**Squad car usage and availability.** Squad car usage and availability was also mentioned as an obstacle by 14% of the officers. When availability or access to a squad car was limited, so was the officer’s ability to patrol, another obstacle to managing the beat that the officer had to contend with. Regarding availability, specifically, every day one to three of the evening shift officers would have to go through what I refer to as the “squad car shuffle”. Because parking was limited at the station, some of the night shift officers, at the end of their shift, would park their cars at the “mini barn”, a small parking structure approximately four blocks from the station, and a sergeant would pick them up and take them back to the station. When the evening shift comes

on, some of these officers share their car with a day shift officer and wait for them to return while the majority of the shift cars are on the lot. However, for some officers, after they leave the briefing room, they must determine where their car is, and it would typically be at the mini-barn. The officers would have to find another officer to give them a ride over to the mini barn where they could then begin the process of getting the car ready. I observed this process occurring relatively often and it could take 20 minutes to half an hour. For example, Officer 47 said:

Participant: Squad availability, if there's repairs with your squad, having to find one, you can't be out there [patrolling] if you spend the first part of your shift looking for a car.

Interviewer: Noticed a lot of guys doing that. 'Is my car here? No, it's across the way. Can I get a ride? Ok'.

Participant: Yeah, you have to constantly finagle a ride. It'd be a little unrealistic I suppose to expect take-home cars like the highway patrol, that'd be a lot of cars.

Interviewer: Yeah, like you said [previously] if a whole half hour is spent moving cars back and forth...

Participant: It takes away from your patrol time.

The other vehicle-related issues identified included officers being pulled off their beat or away from their work to act as a transport for investigators and K-9 units because vehicles used by those units have no space or protective barrier in the vehicle to allow them to transport prisoners. A few officers said it was an impediment to their patrolling for them to be called in to a scene for a jail run when other options could be utilized. As this officer noted,

A big new thing we got going now is the Street Crime Unit that they just started and they're all hunting warrants and that's great, that's fine, but again we'll get extremely busy and they'll go arrest someone and they have to have a squad come over and transport the prisoner for them. I don't mind doing that but to me it's ridiculous. I go there and they got four police officers there and they have to have a squad car come over and transport because their cars, they're not in marked squads, and don't have cages. And so we've said maybe one of the cars you could put a cage in... but the head of the unit, a lieutenant, didn't want to do that. So it seems like they're doing the [arrest] paperwork, usually they're doing the paperwork on it anyways, so maybe you [the Street Crime Unit]

could just drive a person [officer] out there [to the scene] and you wouldn't have to take another car off the street.

**Departmental processing regulations.** Going beyond the volume of paperwork generated through their patrol activities, as mentioned in work-related obstacles, a few officers (10%) did not see the reasoning behind departmentally mandated complex rules, technicalities, and regulations regarding the production of paperwork and reports. Rules and procedures related to the paperwork for traffic accidents, evidence handling, and found property were seen as confusing, time-wasters and unnecessary. Officers felt some of these procedures could be eliminated or the tasks could be handled more effectively by evidence technicians and that the time taken to understand and carry out these extra processes and rules took away from patrol time on the street.

### **Public Related Obstacles**

Public related obstacles referred to the calls for service the public generates as well public perception and interaction with officers. Calls for service issues fell into two categories-high call volume and nuisance calls [calls for service that officers feel are not law enforcement or police related]. While the scope of public-related obstacles was limited, 49% of the officers mentioned high call volume acting as an obstacle to patrolling and it was the most frequently mentioned of all obstacles. Twenty percent of officers considered nuisance calls as an obstacle to patrol as well.

**Call volume.** Call volume related to the shift characteristics. Officers typically said that day shift was slow until after noon, evening shift was busy with officers going call to call to call through most of the shift, and night shift tended to busy at the start of the shift but slowed down after 3:00 a.m. Many officers observed that call volume dictated the available time left for patrol and other duties and inhibited their ability to effectively patrol. For example, one officer said, "It

just gets draining sometimes when you're not allowed to just patrol, I guess. It's like calls to calls to calls, that's not really patrol to me. That's what it is on evening shift, that's my definition of patrol on evening shift—taking my calls and doing my reports. But patrolling to me is getting out and doing what we've been doing [officer-directed patrolling]." Officer 28, related how call volume affected patrol as well as the accomplishment of some of the other beat expectations,

So as far as quality patrol, we really don't get it on this shift. It's all reactive patrol, we're going call to call to call. It's what, 6 o'clock now? Theoretically I've been on the shift for an hour and half and I haven't been to my district yet and I've had two calls for service... You don't have control over anything in your day. Keep in mind you've got your normal calls for service, you've got to fit in there traffic enforcement, you have to fit in there COP checks, you have your bar checks, you have sex offender checks you have to do within your month, you have follow-ups from previous cases, and you only got ten hours to get everything done, including getting your paperwork done from your calls for service that day. So there's a lot of days you come into work with a game plan, "Ok, I'm gonna get five traffic stops in and I'm gonna do this and I'm gonna do that, then you walk in the door and you get slammed with five reports back to back, and your whole day just went downhill.

Officers saw a variety of factors influencing their beat's call volume besides beat and shift characteristics. For example, one officer mentioned city growth,

It's probably almost evenly split fifty-fifty [call volume and staffing as obstacles]. Fargo's continued to grow and really we're operating at the same level of people on the street per shift that we did when I started here and the population has gotten quite a bit bigger in 5 years.<sup>13</sup> Even the beat [is bigger]. When I first started working out here, it was just empty plots and stuff, now just about every open space of land is sold and being built on, I mean every place has a sign up on it now, so even just the concentration of stuff on the beat has got to be a lot more. And we're working with the same number of people on shift that we did five years ago. There's a lot more people and calls for service have gone up a lot every year. So were tasked with a lot more with the same amount of people.

Criminological research has demonstrated the temporal patterns associated with calls for service and reports of crime vary by time of day, day of the week, and time of the year (Falk,

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<sup>13</sup> According to Deputy Chief Anderson, the department established the four district, twelve beat, one officer per beat configuration in 2011.

1952; Ratcliffe and McCullagh, 1998; Felson and Poulsen, 2003; and Butke and Sheridan, 2010). Officers were also aware of these patterns. The day of the week was a factor mentioned by Officer 44, “Like you said it varies extremely, depending on the day. On weekends, I think yesterday, driving around I probably spent a quarter or a fifth of my shift driving around, I took a bunch of calls, I got five reports. Two weekends ago I had 25 calls and on nights that’s extremely busy, on evenings that’s a busy day, on days that’s a busy day, on nights we only get ten calls and that’s considered steady but they’re good calls. Days like today, Sunday night, 90% of my time is spent driving around or sitting in the station doing paperwork, if I have paperwork to catch up on.” Season and weather were factors mentioned by another officer, “In the summer when things pick up you can get a random Tuesday, Wednesday [days with typically lower call volume] that’s busy ‘cause you’re out chasing car prowlers and it’s nice out so people have been barbequing and drinking all day, stuff like that. So it varies, but more so on the night shift we spend a lot of time out looking for our own stuff, patrolling around.”

When call volume is high, officers have less time to devote to patrolling. For example, Officer 28 said, “I don’t get quality patrol time, frankly. Calls for service on this shift don’t allow for you to have quality patrol time.” This sentiment was echoed by Officer 39, “There’s some nights where I’ve taken 25 calls, that is definitely an obstacle that you gotta work around. It gets pretty tough to get out into neighborhoods and patrol those neighborhoods and stop car prowlers and stuff like that when your busy going call to call to call.” Officers have a sense that their effectiveness suffers if they do not have time to focus on the problems, like traffic enforcement, on their beat. For example, Officer 48 said, “I mean I don’t do this very often. I don’t get to sit here and run traffic or anything like this ‘cause I’m taking too many calls for service and the travel times are too great, I just can’t. I mean I can run my radar going to calls and if somebody is

really speeding or something like that I'll turn on my lights and give them a honk of my siren and that'll slow 'em down but it's not very effective I guess.”

With two cars runs being commonplace, the call volume on other beats affects officers' ability to patrol their own beat as mentioned by Officer 36: “Call volume can affect that, you're constantly taking runs that can interrupt your ability to get that done. The same thing with my beat which is quiet. I get called down to Beat X and Beat Y pretty frequently for calls for service.” Officer 57 also said that call volume in other beats and districts forces officers to split their time in other beats, “The only other thing that gets in the way is another beat or district that gets swamped with calls, if they get a big domestic or whatever, something that takes up a lot of their time, then you end up covering your beat as well as picking up calls for other people. Which is fine, it just takes time out of your schedule.” Officer 48 also mentioned how the effect of call volume on patrolling can still exist even after call volume has subsided, “Usually I'm stacked two or three calls right out of the station. I don't have time to look at a car, make a traffic stop, go on patrol, I've been going call to call to call. And then when it finally slows down, the last thing I wanna do is go around and drive around and try and drum up some more work when I already have three hours of paperwork to do. Last thing I wanna do is make some traffic violation for a [license] tab being out and then have three warrants or something that's gonna stack another bunch of paperwork on me. I'd rather just get caught up on my work...”

*Need for extra patrol.* Officers also had the opportunity to discuss the subject of extra patrol. Officers had previously spoken about how issues like call volume and short staffing inhibited their ability to patrol and they were asked to assess the need for extra patrol on their shift on their beat; either if they had more time to patrol or if there was an additional officer on the beat to handle patrol and calls. Sixty percent of the officers (N=57) felt that their shift and

beat could benefit from additional patrol with 14% officers believing that all shifts and beats could benefit, with some officers noting the need because most calls are two car runs anyway. While 28 % of officers felt there was sufficient patrol activity on their beats, 7% also noted that while it was not necessary on their shift, other shifts would benefit. Other officers (12%) felt that it may sometimes be beneficial depending on call volume or day of the week. A couple of officers forwarded suggestions that the department bring back the power shift [free-roaming officers who's shift covers the busiest part of the evening and night shifts] or that each district could employ a resource officer.

Within the different officer descriptive categories, the officers in some groups referenced the need for extra patrol to benefit the shift overwhelmingly more than those feeling there was a lack of need for extra patrol. District 2 officers, at a ratio of 6.5 to 1, felt their beat would benefit from extra patrol, similar to the 6.6 to 1 ratio of novice officers. Evening shift officers, at a ratio of 9 to 1, also felt their beat would benefit from extra patrol.

**Nuisance calls.** Twenty percent of officers referenced nuisance calls as obstacles as well. Nuisance calls are dispatched calls for service that were typically defined by officers as being a nuisance if they were low priority, that is calls that had little to do with law enforcement, did not require an immediate response from officers, or were of a nature that the responding officer could do little to rectify the situation. Examples of these include: stray animals, accident reports for minor “fender-benders”, people annoyed by noisy children, garbage in the road, found property pick-ups, overly suspicious neighbors, repeated false alarms at businesses, taking criminal reports from citizens who have little information about the crime or which likely would not be prosecuted, people wanting to vent about injustices, and mothers who could not get their

kids up and off to school. As one officer noted, “I’m amazed to no end how a segment of the population cannot manage their own lives for such little things.”

Officers considered nuisance calls were generated through the nature of some calls for service by the public and both dispatch and officers’ inability to screen out these calls. Twenty-nine-percent of officers voiced this complaint about the inability to screen out some calls. The dispatch system is set up so that if someone calls into dispatch requesting the presence of a police officer, an officer must be dispatched, and some of these calls are subsequently viewed as nuisance calls. While not strictly law enforcement-related, many were calls where a police response would be expected or warranted by both the department and public, despite being viewed by officers as low priority or mundane.

A sense of frustration was also evident in officers’ responses regarding the source of nuisance calls. Some officers focused on the dispatch center. Officer 46 said, “I would say the biggest thing in blocking is being sent on calls that aren’t police calls but we still have to go. Those kind of dig into our time. The way things are set up in our dispatch center, they have to, if they get a call they have to send it to somebody, even if it’s completely not related to policing, we can’t do anything with it, we still have to take the time to go. None of that stuff gets filtered out, I’d say that’s one of the biggest things that hinders us.” Officer 52 explained further,

Dispatch can’t help what they get. They get the calls and they have to put it out and proceed with what they have to follow which can be very frustrating for us ‘cause we’re like ‘Why are we taking this call?’ You have to go there and tell em ‘Look, this is a civil matter’ which it is. Dispatch can’t, they can’t tell them that, they have to send someone out if they request someone. They try and explain it a little bit to them but they wanna see a patrol officer and talk to them, and we go. It’s frustrating at times, ya wanna take it out on dispatch but it’s not their fault when you think about it. They’re just doing their job, and what they have to do, and their priorities.

Other officers also noted the public’s role in generating these calls. For example, this officer said, “The nuisance calls where people call and just wanna talk about something that



happened two weeks ago, or just to get information on something, or the car that's speeding in the area an hour and half ago, all those daily things that are going on. It may be important to somebody else's life but if a little planning and time management would have been---it would have been way more effective and efficient and keeps an officer out on the street doing what the animal is trained to do, patrol. That's our directive but to be constantly pulled off by all the mundane tasks can make it frustrating.”

In some instances, the nuisance calls stem from the public failing to make the distinction between a law enforcement matter and what is termed a civil matter. Some disputes between private parties are civil matters and officers have no power to take any particular action. For example, these may occur in child visitation issues where one party is not complying with a court order or when two parties have a dispute over ownership of a piece of property. Neither dispatch nor the officer can pre-emptively dismiss the call by informing the parties it is a civil matter. An officer must respond in some manner if requested. The officer will then attempt to make the complainant understand they can do nothing in a civil matter.

The public feels a sense of frustration as well when they are told by officers their complaint is a civil matter. I accompanied an officer to a call regarding a man whose complaint was that he paid an acquaintance a certain amount of money to put talk-time on his cellphone. When the man discovered the acquaintance had not done so and kept the money, he contacted the police. While the man might certainly have felt that a crime had been committed, in that the acquaintance scammed him out of his money, because the man and the acquaintance had entered into an agreement regarding the money and service to be performed, it amounted to a civil matter. The man tried very hard to convince the officer that something should be done because he felt that the acquaintance stole the money from him. He even went so far as to tell the officer

he thought the acquaintance might be in the Somali terrorist organization Al-Shabaab, but the officer had to keep patiently explaining that, because it was a civil matter, he could take no action.

Nuisance calls were typically viewed as a source of frustration for officers because they said it took away from their important work. This officer elaborated,

There's calls I know we need to go on, that doesn't bother me, breaking up my day if I have to take an accident report, I get that. But sometimes where we get frustrated when we're trying to get out and write tickets, trying to do what we need to do, you get sent on, and I got to choose my words wisely, but not to sugarcoat anything, is some of these calls for service are ridiculous calls for service. Those are the ones that frustrate me. I'd rather be doing something to help people versus... it's like trash in the road or somebody calls in about a suspicious man. 'Well what's he doing? Oh, he's running through the neighborhood'. Well maybe he's jogging, and they want the neighborhood checked. Sometimes you wonder what people are calling in for, those are the kinds of calls—I do 'em and like I said it's frustrating. And it's nothing personal against anybody, it's just sometimes frustrating 'cause I don't get to do what I want to do or what I think I should be doing.

*Officers' remedies for nuisance calls.* Because these calls go through dispatch, dispatch must assign the call to officers. In some cases, officers are able to get dispatch to put the call on hold while they finish whatever task was at hand, but eventually they must take the call. In some instances, officers can try to save time by calling an individual on the phone for information rather than driving to the caller's location, or by handling the low priority call while in the area on other business rather than making a specific trip to the location.

A few officers suggested that training and protocols for dispatch be changed or improved. This suggestion has been made by officers to the administration but there has been no indication as to whether it would be addressed. Other officers said that utilizing a Community Service Officer (CSO) rather than a sworn officer could relieve some of those nuisance calls. CSOs currently handle animal complaints, property returns, and other non-law enforcement related duties but do not take criminal activity reports. CSOs are also typically on duty only during the

day shift on weekdays. Officer 62 stated, “It’s good to have those CSOs to take care of some of that so you're able to do more of the patrolling in the areas. So I guess that would be one of the biggest roadblocks, going to some of those calls. It would be nice to create a department website where you could report some of the stuff on there and submit it there and somebody from the PD in records can pull that out and then we can worry about it. I say patrol officers having to go to some of these calls, come on, we could be doing something else other than this, taking care of a barking dog.”

An officer and I once spent about 20 minutes on a call in a futile attempt to locate and pick up a loose dog running through a trailer court because there was no CSO available at the time. It was easy to see how calls like these are perceived as time wasters and how they generate frustration. However, in this instance, with the officer on foot, it gave him the opportunity to engage in positive community contacts in an area typically viewed as a hotspot.

**Other public related obstacles.** Other obstacles referenced by just a few officers included a perceived increasing lack of respect and compliance from the public as well as in the way policing is portrayed in the news media. These officers perceived that negative reports in the news media, that were then amplified by the news media’s 24-hour news cycle, generated stigmatization of the police in general, and that stigma extended to local officers. One officer said, “And to me that’s one of the biggest problems of law enforcement, and another thing that makes it hard. You see the national events in the news and for some reason that trickles all the way to here; they [the public] think every cop nowadays is a crooked cop.” Officer 67 expressed a similar view, which can affect how an officer attempts to interact with the community, but in this officer’s case, in a positive way, “Something else that makes it difficult to patrol is the stigma we have in the media, which also makes me wanna do it, to get out there and make those

contacts in the community and let them [the public] know we're not a bunch of angry individuals that are gonna be mean to them.”

**Obstacles by type of officer.** Among the different obstacle themes there were few variations within the officers’ descriptive categories. Most officers referenced slightly more departmental obstacles than public obstacles based largely on staffing issues and other departmental issues versus call volume. A difference was noted by shift with the night shift referencing fewer obstacles than the other two shifts. Night shift officers less frequently referred to assignments, nuisance calls, follow-up, staffing issues, and traffic accidents and their reports as obstacles.

In summary, officers said that patrolling is an important function of policing in general as well as is integral to managing their area of responsibility however officers found there were conditions and situations during the workday that functioned as obstacles to patrolling. Obstacles were organized under the four themes of environmental, departmental, work and the public. The most frequently identified were short staffing as a departmental-related obstacle; having extra duties and assignments as a work-related obstacle; and high call volume, and nuisance calls as public-related obstacles. Officers presented some remedies for some of these obstacles but apart from not applying for, or accepting, extra duties and assignments, officers had little control over these obstacles, being somewhat at the mercy of the department and the public that generates them. There were also clear indications that short staffing and call volume were also inter-related. When officers spoke on either subject, they frequently made note of the relationship. Officers reported that high call volume places stress on officers who then desire to take time off to prevent burnout. In a reciprocal nature, when too many officers are out sick or taking personal

days, staffing is short and not all beats are covered, increasing the call volume per officer, and thus increased stress on the officers.

Some obstacles experienced by officers are similar to workplace obstacles in other professions. Occupations from nursing to teaching to food service have voiced complaints about bureaucracy, excessive paperwork, a lack of time, a loss of autonomy, large workloads, and short staffing that add stress to their workday or make it difficult to accomplish workplace goals and duties (Turner, 1986; Wisniewski and Gargiulo, 1997; Clayton, Griffith, Price, and Peters, 2002; Al-Kandari and Thomas, 2009). An underlying theme with these studies was that employees felt like these obstacles prevented or inhibited them from what they deemed was their important work. Similar to the officers in this study, nurses and teachers found it difficult to accomplish the core or important goals of their profession because significant amounts of their available time were spent overcoming or dealing with these obstacles.

Officers have already stated the importance they put on patrol and because of the value placed on their perception of patrol, these obstacles may be subjectively viewed by patrol officers as especially onerous. These complaints, besides expressing frustration, could also be serving a larger purpose. These views do not have to be considered only in the context of individual officers complaining about work situations but as Turner (1986) described it in his nursing study; this vocabulary of complaints formed a discourse that bound “nurses together as an occupational community in opposition to the hospital system” (p. 1). This vocabulary of complaints articulated “a subcultural perspective within the occupation and provides a sense of solidarity among lower order practitioners” (p. 2).

The public is also a source of obstacles. While the public generates the service calls that contribute to heavy workloads for officers, they took issue with what they referred to as nuisance

calls. The obstacles encountered by officers stemming from the public may reflect a form of role conflict. Officers in this study, through their stated purposes, and the way they serve them, their goals, their patrol preferences, as well as effective and efficient behaviors, demonstrated they have both a strong orientation to the community and law enforcement. The officers also employed discretion in their public contacts. However, in the context of nuisance calls, these calls for service often required officers to informally handle situation like keeping the peace in a neighborhood or solve relatively small problems that are disrupting society. From officer descriptions and my observations, these calls involve the public's expectation of personal service, attention, and aid. While these calls and situations might dovetail with a watchman or service orientation (Wilson, 1968), officers instead view these calls as nuisances or an inappropriate use of police resources. Despite officers stating a desire to positively interact with the public, officers seemed to orient themselves to a more legalistic view in the context of nuisance calls. Officers see these calls and situations as lacking a real law enforcement component as often no law has fundamentally been broken or the offense is so minor that it would conceivably been ignored or handled informally by the officer as it does not really constitute a harm to society. In these cases, a service orientation appears to be contingent on the conditions surrounding a call. While these calls and situations may technically constitute offering service to individuals by helping them deal with their complaint or problem, the nature of the complaint, and the circumstances around the complaint, identified it as a nuisance which can then affect the officer's perception of the individual making the complaint. If a person required aid or assistance through no fault of their own, officers accepted their service role. However, if the problem was brought on by the individual themselves either through their attitude, behavior,

naiveté, or lack of initiative, officers appeared to be less willing to view it as a service and more as a nuisance

Though mentioned by only a few officers, interaction with the public can sometimes act as an obstacle. Because of the importance that officers place in communication and community interaction, and the way those factors figure into the ability of officers to manage their area of responsibility, the subject is explored further.

### **Community Interaction and Communication**

Officers have previously referenced community interaction in the form of positive community contact as a goal, serving the purposes of patrol, as a preference to engage in during patrol, incorporated into effectiveness through making community contact in the form of COPs, and making field contacts as a technique on patrol as well as a component in being a good patrol officer. Communication skills were seen as valuable as well in managing calls and contacts, building rapport, establishing positive contacts, and gathering intelligence. Some officers mentioned that the public's impression of officers can serve as an obstacle to patrolling and because community interaction, and especially communication, were so important to officers, as well as being important to the field of policing, a more in-depth consideration is given to how the public/officer interaction works within the context of their patrolling. It may affect officers and the way they manage their area of responsibility in several ways. It may affect how officers approach situations on their beat and how officers perceive the public. In the context of procedural justice, how the public perceives officers can affect how officers are treated by the public, whether the public will be cooperative with officers and offer information to them, and whether officers feel comfortable in asking for information and assistance of the public.

Two general themes regarding communicative interaction between the public and police emerged during the interview process, each of which could provide opportunities to enhance their patrol work or establish limitations on their patrol work. One theme was the officers' attempts to make positive contacts with the public; their desire to do so and the benefits that could result from public contacts. Officers throughout the study referenced ways in which they tried to establish, and accomplish, positive contact with community. When officers viewed patrol, as discussed earlier, community interaction was a component in purposes as goals, as well as being a component in effective policing. This positive interaction and contact could entail stopping to chat with citizens out in the neighborhoods while on patrol, stopping to check in at local businesses, and making friendly contact with neighborhood children, or taking an extra step in offering assistance to a member of the public. The other theme was officers' perception of the public's reaction to interaction with officers. The public could respond in a variety of ways both to positive contact, described above, that officers established as well as to what might be viewed as negative contacts. A member of the public being stopped and/or questioned by an officer, citizens interacting with officers during a call for service, or members of the public being told what to do or where to go by officers are examples of situations where citizens could perceive the contact with an officer as negative.

Officers recognize the importance of making contact with citizens, and even more so in making positive contact, as well as recognizing that not all contacts with subjects need to be harsh in nature. While a few officers mentioned enjoying having the contact with the public, and recognized the benefit of doing so, officers may also feel there are some days they may not be in the mood to make contact with the public. For example, Officer 35 said,

Another part of the patrol job that I admit at times I do a better job than others, is not always dealing with the public as a law enforcement officer but dealing with the public in



general. You see the things, the guys playing basketball, even if we're stopping and having coffee and a guy walks by and visits for a few minutes. I think that's a very important part, especially in a city like Fargo. I think we have a lot of people, Fargo is growing, but we still have a lot of people who have lived here their whole lives and still think Fargo is small-town too. So I think that's an important aspect of it. Like I said they're days I feel like doing that, other days I don't but I do think I recognize that that's needed...

Officers said that it is important to know the people on their beat and officers can adopt an attitude of being a part of small community (on their beat) to help facilitate that communication. Some officers also said that because officers can become jaded from the job it is important to try and retain empathy for the citizens and their situation.

Other ways that officers foster that communication is the ability to engage in self-initiated activities which helped allow officers to make those community contacts and some officers noted that good communication with the public develops through experience on the job. Officers could also utilize foot and bike patrol to help establish those contacts. Officers recognized that through the building of community relationships officers can more easily gather intelligence from the public that will assist them in their duties and the public might be more easily prompted into providing intelligence to officers. For example, Officer 67 said,

If I can make contact with citizens in the area. I think most officers become one to help people. I do, you go on a call you want to help someone in their time of need. So you wanna have that relationship with the community, stop and talk to people, see if they've seen anything in the area they didn't report, they'd like to talk about, just let them know we're approachable and friendly. People act surprised that we're so nice, maybe they never talked to an officer before or maybe it's media portraying us as not nice people, or other people told them we weren't nice. I don't know what led them to believe that, that they act so surprised that we're nice.

One officer also noticed a disjuncture between the police and the public that must be overcome,

The people living in those areas—when I'm going through a neighborhood, if I see somebody standing on the curb, I'll pull over and just stop and say 'Hey, how's it going, any problems that you see', whatever, so the people know what's going on. A lot of 'em aren't going to say anything unless you go and ask them 'cause this is the day and age of 'I don't wanna get involved' or people are concerned if they say something, it may get

out that you were talkin' or whatever. Not so much up here in north Fargo, there's a few areas that are a little more crime ridden than others, but the people in the neighborhoods, if you talk to them, they'll keep you advised.

In the earlier discussion of community interaction, officers identified the positive components of this interaction, however as officers discussed more of this interaction, both positive and negative aspects became apparent. Officers' perceptions of the public had both positive and negative aspects as well. A few officers noted that the public liked to see officers and, enjoyed positive contact with officers, and officers would try to meet that need. For example, Officer 20 said, "I like to be seen in the early morning by the early morning people going to work and the joggers, they always appreciate that, the dog walkers, the people that are out and about in the neighborhood. I think it's of great importance for the officer to be seen there, not always just on the major thoroughfares where the best opportunity to get a citation is, but in the neighborhoods to make people feel better." Officers also felt that the public appreciated the contact that came from foot patrol, and noting that the public responded positively to officers when treated positively by officers, officers could utilize foot patrol to make those positive contacts. For example, Officer 14 said, "Foot patrol is a lot based on people. They really like it, especially businesses. They've mentioned it to sergeants, to us. If they haven't seen us in a while they'll mention it. I think it makes the community feel a little more secure, it's nice to see someone with a badge on for you."

Other officers, however, indicated that there are some members of the public who do not like to see officers in general and some who do not like the police, unless they happened to need them. Some of this may be based on past experience, as explained by one officer,

Depending on what demographic or geographic location somebody comes from or what kind of police department was in or around the area they came from...I mean some people look at you and go 'Oh crap, that's a cop!' I mean just right off the bat, you can't even look at some people and it's like 'Holy shit'-they're scared, they're worried, anxious,

they're what-not and sometimes it's people walking down the street and you're not even dealing with them. A lot of people you do deal with, if you communicate with them effectively, treat them like a human being, then they'll kind of snap out of it and tell you a horror story of why they were afraid or something and so you can get an aspect of why they act and feel the way they do when they see a police officer.

Some officers considered that some members of the public do not want to form relationships with the police, they just want their problems solved. Since the police have historically been viewed as problem solvers the public is resistant to being part of the solution to crime problems. They noted some members of the public do not always forward information that officers can utilize in their duties, are not safety or security conscious, and reject utilizing CSOs and other alternative solutions in favor of having an officer present to solve a problem. For example, one officer noted this about the public and crime prevention,

A lot of people still want the officer to fix things like in the old days. Cops spent many years saying, 'We're a professional organization, we're going to fix things for you.' Now we want police officers to have a working relationship with the public which means other people have to be involved and do stuff but I cannot think of a neighborhood watch program that has lasted five years or actually stayed together. People lose interest. They're all willing to say let's have a neighborhood watch because they're a victim of crime on this day but soon things start slipping back to normal. They've lost that interest. So no matter how much you wanna beat that down—they just want us to handle it. They just want us to take care of it. They don't want to be involved in that.

Officers expressed some frustration when faced with reactions to their attempts to address issues or potential problems, for example taking steps to build a better relationship between contentious individuals, trying to get property owners to address a problem, or trying to help citizens reduce their risk of theft. This officer commented,

A challenge for me is how I can let a person know that I think they're absolutely stupid without telling them that, that's kind of a personal challenge 'cause I don't wanna get in trouble but some of the people you deal with, the neighbor disputes, it's a sad state of affairs that it's come to this but a lot of calls are a next-door neighbor and they'll say, 'My neighbor's out in the yard and he's got his music too loud.' I'll do this a lot, I'll call the caller and say to them 'What did your neighbor say to you when you went and asked him to turn it down?' And of course the answer is always 'I didn't go talk to them, I didn't ask them.' I guess if it's my neighbor and they had the music's too loud, I'd go ask them but

on the other hand, I know there's places certainly in the country where if you did that you're probably gonna get punched or worse, so I can understand the hesitancy.

Another officer also expressed some frustration with the public in this exchange in the interview:

Participant: You know I wish I could say I was surprised, but doing this job as short as I've been doing it... I don't know how many reports I've taken where 'Yeah I left my expensive camera sitting out here, I just wanted to run inside quick and it was gone'. Imagine that.

Interviewer: If people put their stuff away, locked their cars, locked their front doors, shut their garage, you could knock down a lot of crime.

Participant: Oh yeah, I hear that. You take a lot of those reports, they're frustrating. 'My house was burglarized.' 'Well did you lock your door?' 'No.' 'Did you turn on any of your lights or do anything to deter a burglar?' 'Nope, I just left my door wide open and somebody walked in and stole all my stuff'. Imagine that. People's perception of Fargo—I always hear that, 'It's just Fargo'. God, if you only knew...Folks don't realize how big Fargo is getting and the type of people who are moving through and it's just—not everybody is genuinely like how people think they should be.

While a few officers noted they offer safety and security advice to members of the public and businesses, officers tended to comment on how some members of the public lose interest in things like neighborhood watches and other anti-crime programs as noted above, feel that their advice is ignored, or that some members of the public do not understand safety and security issues. For example, this officer found it necessary to keep members of the public informed about giving money to the homeless, "A lot of the homeless are constantly panhandling down there [downtown] and people are afraid of 'em so they give them money. The don't wanna turn them down 'cause they're scared what the repercussions will be and a lot of these homeless people look pretty scary so if we see that we'll stop and chat with them, ask if they gave them money and if they did, say please don't do that, it's like feeding the bears (laughs). You feel for them [the homeless] but at the same time it makes them do it more and more and more."

Officers also said that advice to businesses about crime prevention was usually met with half-measures or they encountered management or corporate obstacles. For example, one officer said,

...but one thing I've always told them is 'Hey, I'm on patrol, you're the clerk, I'm driving by, I wanna make sure everything is ok but I can't frickin' see you through that cigarette thing [display advertising], you got all that stuff there'. I talked to them about it, 'Can you get that moved so that I can see you and help provide safety for you and maybe I would see that you're being robbed and be able to do something?' No. And course they say corporate says we have to do this. They don't want me telling them how to do their business. Well you know they're not interested in that. So they don't want that.

Similarly, another officer said,

It depends on how much effort you want to put into it and what the business is and what you're asking. If say I go to the gas station right over here and I tell them 'I see that you got your security camera setup, ya know they'd be better placed if you moved them here', this, that, and the other thing. I tell that to the clerk and leave it at that, 110% chance nothing is going to happen. 'cause it's not his problem so if I ask him who his manager is and talk to the manager, it's a possibility. But if I ask the manager who his regional director is and ask him if it's alright with him to get in touch with the regional manager and then talk to the regional manager the chances of something happening are a lot better. But then again that's that part of it. This part of it is financial, how much money is it going to cost them to move their cameras from this point to that point and they're going to look at it, is it financially worth it to them?

Some officers also said that some members of the public fail to appreciate their efforts or understand officers' limitations officers in what actions they can take. Often times citizens wish to see an arrest made or report written despite officers not having the ability to do so, as in a civil matter, or when there is little utility to an officer engaging in the behavior. For example, one officer recounted the following experience in dealing with store management regarding a shoplifting incident,

...what am I going to do? Drive to—get two detectives to drive to White Bear Lake to try to get a hold of this girl for someone who *tried* to steal something? So he was just mad. He said 'You guys NEVER help us' and I take offense to that because I believe the last two shoplifters they had were very similar ones to this, where the people fled... so I ended up tracking her down [of the last two similar shoplifters], getting a confession, getting the merchandise back, getting restitution, so it's like if it's realistic to do—I'll

gladly do it. So I asked him if [the local grocery store], which clearly has loss prevention people or security, are they going to send them to White Bear Lake to track this girl down? I don't think they're gonna. So why would we do it?

When officers are faced with these situations, they must negotiate these citizen concerns and problems within the context of what they can do, and what is reasonable to do, while still trying to keep the citizen satisfied. One officer explained,

It kinda goes hand in hand—I think that's what makes a successful officer too is being able to talk to people and work out solutions, not necessarily showing up and [saying] 'I'm not gonna do that' [make an arrest], who reacts well to that? I think people call us to solve their issues and a lot of the times, I mean I would say a success rate to solve some of these problems, like what they actually wanted when they called me as to what I actually gave them when I go there, it's probably like 25%. They didn't get what they wanted but I sure sold it to them like they got what they wanted even though they got nothing they wanted.

Across the different officer descriptive categories, officers more often spoke of positive views of community interaction than negative views of interaction. However, the officers who more frequently mentioned having community interaction were District 1, veteran, and day shift officers, suggesting that other beats and shifts may have limited opportunities for self-initiated public contact and may be more call-driven.

In summary, officers have a relationship with the public that is sometimes at odds with itself. As described here and as was indicated in the discussion on nuisance calls, while officers recognize the importance of good communication and community interaction, officers can become frustrated, jaded, and cynical when they perceive members of the public as unsupportive of the police's role and lacking the initiative to insure their own safety and security. This uneasy relationship with the public can become an obstacle to effective patrolling by establishing or maintaining a separation between the public and officers that inhibits information sharing and cooperation. This separation between the public and the police may be attenuated or enhanced dependent on the shift and beat, as they may provide different opportunities to make contact with

the public in different contexts. Officers who work the day shift may have more opportunity to engage in positive interaction with citizens as compared to officers working the other shifts whose opportunities for citizen interaction more often involve calls for service. The beats, and their neighborhoods, also can vary in their capacity to provide positive citizen interaction. If a neighborhood is not conducive to positive citizen interaction, such as containing smaller residential areas, fewer single family homes, large business and retail areas, and higher crime rates, there are reduced opportunities for officers to establish positive community interaction.

## HOW OFFICERS PERCEIVE AND USE INTELLIGENCE

The second research question, how do officers perceive and use of intelligence (intel), examines how they perceive the purpose, amount, value, and utility of different forms of intelligence and how the use of intelligence influences beat management. Intelligence is defined as information that can inform, assist, or direct them in performing patrol officer tasks or duties. Types of intelligence can include information on suspects, the frequency of incidents or crimes, or the location of crime and traffic problems; it can also include directives regarding areas of the beat or specific behaviors for officers to focus on. Each category or type of has a broad range of dimensional characteristics. For example, information on individuals could include their criminal history, law enforcement “cautions”, and known associates while location related intelligence could include the number of traffic accidents at an intersection or the number of calls for service at a particular address. Directives to officers might direct them to patrol certain locations more frequently to deter criminal activity or direct their focus to certain locations at certain times, like bars at closing time, to help maintain order.

Intelligence can be broadly categorized as officer-derived or departmentally-derived. Departmentally-derived intelligence (or simply departmental intelligence) is, gathered, developed, or generated by sergeants or the administration (lieutenants, captains, deputy chiefs and the chief of police) and then passed on to patrol officers. Officer-derived intelligence (or simply officer intelligence) is developed and possessed by individual officers from their own experiences or sources for their own use, or intelligence developed by patrol officers, that is shared among other patrol officers.

In recent years, the study department experienced important changes in how information was relayed by the administration and between officers. Besides utilizing more computer



technology in disseminating intelligence through access to reports and data, and email, the administration made a change in how intelligence was utilized in briefings. Historically, shift briefing for officers consisted of going through a briefing book, a loose-leaf binder that contained the briefing information for that shift. According to Deputy Chief Anderson, the department transitioned from a briefing book to a briefing blog sometime in 2005-2006. This provided an electronic format for sergeant and departmental intelligence, and allowed patrol officers to post intelligence themselves in order to more effectively and efficiently provide that information to other patrol officers.

To understand how officers perceive and use intelligence, I examined the sources of departmental and officer intelligence as well as officers' perceptions of the utility and value of the intelligence from these different sources. I also examined the mode and quality of intelligence communication in the department and between officers.

### **Departmental Intelligence Sources**

Patrol officers are provided various forms of intelligence from the department, much of it provided in an electronic format, either in the form of databases or electronic documents accessible from computers or in-car terminals, through the briefing blog, an electronic bulletin board utilized during shift briefings, as well as email. This intelligence contains data and information on offenders, geographic areas, specific crimes, and crime trends as well as patrol directives, provided by sergeants and administrative personnel, which are intended to focus officers' efforts on problems or goals for the department. Sources that officers utilize include database and records, the briefing blog, patrol directives, and a new format for intelligence referred to as Intelligence Led Policing (ILP).

## **Databases and Records**

Officers have a wide variety of departmental intelligence provided to them in an electronic format including the following: First utilized by the department in 1999, Compstat is an accounting of the past month's index crimes, calls for service, and traffic accidents. Deputy Chief Anderson said while they are still using Compstat, Chief Todd found Compstat to be stale [intelligence] and there currently has been a shift away from "numbers" and toward event and people centered intelligence. Command Central, introduced in 2012, is an accounting of the past week's calls for service, accidents, and crimes that provides links to the specific reports and extracts information from the New World incident reporting system every three hours. Heat maps provide visual representations of the volume of calls for service or hotspots. In-car software allows officers to complete incident reports, and view past incident reports, individuals' criminal background and police contact history, and link between these individuals' information and incident reports through programs like LERNS, New World, and Aegis. The department expected officers to access and utilize this intelligence on their own accord to assist them in their patrol work.

## **The Briefing Blog**

The briefing blog is an electronic bulletin board used by sergeants and administrators to relay information pertinent to the districts, shifts, and beats as well as officers in general. It is both an intelligence source and conduit for intelligence directives. The blog portion of briefing, which was the majority of the briefing period, consisted of the sergeant reading over the blog entries that were displayed on the briefing room screen, which could include; citizen complaints voiced to the department which were then relayed to officers; departmental notifications regarding criminal or traffic activity in particular areas or neighborhoods; Bolo's (Be On the

Look Out for...); cautions, which warn officers about individuals that may pose a threat to their safety; and developing or existing criminal or traffic trends officers should be aware of. It can also be a format used to relay directed patrol information. Patrol directives were developed through departmental analysis and specified individual officers, beats or shifts to provide an extra focus or resources toward a specific problem, for example DUIs or construction site thefts.

### **Directed Patrol**

Officers receive patrol directives from sergeants or lieutenants. Patrol directives are meant to inform patrol officers of pertinent information and direct them to a particular area or to participate in an activity to prevent or inhibit traffic, criminal, or suspicious activities. For example, a rash of break-ins at local churches resulted in a directive to officers ordering them to check the churches on their beat. While some directives may be generated because of citizen requests, for example focusing on a neighborhood for speeders, they are often based on what the department determines to be new, growing or continuing problems with crime or traffic, or may reference intelligence generated by other units within the department, like narcotics. Patrol directives are relayed through email or verbally, directly to individual officers, or directed to officers in general during the briefing.

**Beat ops plan.** The Beat Op Plan was a form of directed patrol used in the department that was in the process of being phased out during the study period.<sup>14</sup> BOPs were electronic documents constructed primarily by lieutenants and which laid out the activities and areas of the beat that officers should be focusing on. Directives might include; a focus on bars at closing

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<sup>14</sup> It is unclear as to why exactly the BOPs were being phased out, though officers' feelings about the BOPs, and the fact that the Deputy Chief who was instrumental in implementing the BOPs had resigned from the department, may have influenced the decision.

time; provide extra patrol to particular neighborhoods or areas because of ongoing problems or their criminogenic nature; showing a presence in the school zones at appropriate times; making airport checks; or other patrol duties particular to the officers' beats. Ideally, the BOPs were updated to reflect changing conditions and situations on the beat that officers should be made aware of and focus their efforts on.

### **Intelligence-Led Policing**

During the data collection period, a new form of intelligence was introduced, referred to in the department as Intelligence-Led Policing (ILP). The ILP was presented in a PowerPoint format and provided officers with a variety of intelligence. According to the sergeant who did the initial presentation in briefing, the ILP was introduced to replace some of the focus on Compstat and provide officers with more useable information. The PowerPoint focused on addresses that have been active with calls for service and on individuals who had active warrants, were wanted for questioning, or were currently involved in investigations. Besides a photo and identifiers for these "frequent flyers", as they were referred to, photos of addresses, vehicles, and the names and identifiers of associates of these individuals might also be on the slide. Other intelligence included Department of Corrections releases and current offense trends. Slide graphics called attention in a dynamic way to important information as well as to the relevant beat. The intelligence not only came from crime reports and statistics but also citizen information and intelligence from other divisions like narcotics, gang, and street crimes units. This approach at intelligence development and dissemination was reminiscent of the approach taken in the United Kingdom's intelligence led policing (Collier, 2006) which was also designed to focus police activities with specific actionable intelligence from diverse sources. As this form of intelligence

was introduced late in the data collection, I was only able to query 19 of the officers regarding their impressions of the ILP.

When the ILP was initially presented to officers, they were told that an updated ILP would be featured weekly on Wednesdays, that officers on the different shifts would have it presented in briefing, and it would be made available on one of the internal computer drives for officers to view on their own.

### **Departmental Intelligence Utilization and Value**

Officers were asked to what degree they utilized departmental intelligence sources when making decisions about and conducting patrol, which provided insight into how often and in what circumstances officers used departmental intelligence. Officers were also asked how they assess the operational value of departmental intelligence, that is, how useful the intelligence was in allowing them to take action, formulating an approach, or providing for some kind operational support or crucial intelligence. When discussing departmental intelligence utilization and value, officers typically referred to the databases and records like Compstat, Command Central and the heat maps in their responses. In addition, as an analysis of directed patrol, officers were asked about their impressions of the BOP and their responses allowed for a separate examination of not only officers' perception of its utility and value but also its construction and purpose. Impressions were also gathered from officers regarding the utility and value of their newest form of intelligence, ILP.

### **Departmental Intelligence Utilization**

While officers' responses varied as to the degree and purposes for which departmental intelligence was utilized, it was typically not used on a regular basis. Seventeen percent of officers stated they use it frequently to make patrol decisions and to keep updated on intel. For

example, Officer 39 said, “I think we rely on it a lot. The intelligence that is passed down through the department through Compstat and Command Central, through the intelligence unit, it gives us a target area.”

Twenty-nine percent of officers stated they use it occasionally, usually in the context of briefing themselves after returning from a few days off from work. For example, Officer 55 said, “But when I been gone for a while and I want to read some reports and I wanna do that stuff, that’s when the Compstat and those things become imperative to what I’m gonna do. I been on vacation for 10 days, what is the first thing I did? I came down to see what’s happening on my beat and see what kind of calls are going on.” However, 39% of officers stated they utilize departmental intelligence very little. Officers felt they were already focusing on issues that were indicated in departmental intelligence. The awareness of the issues stemmed from their activity on the beat and officer intelligence so departmental intelligence was not necessary. Officers also felt they were engaging in activities to address those issues without the need for departmental intelligence. For example, Officer 46 said,

I would say that’s the minority of how I’d describe what I do [utilizing departmental intel]. Like Compstat and Command Central and stuff, it lays everything out there in an easy to see format but very rarely will I look at that and be surprised by something because the other way of doing it, through officers talking and taking the calls out here and being aware of what’s going on, I basically can tell you what Compstat and Command Central are going to show me. Very rarely would there be a bunch or a certain type of crime, vehicle break-ins in a neighborhood that goes on for two or three days that I would be completely unaware of. It’s an added benefit, once in a while you’ll catch something on that you weren’t aware of, but it’s rare.

Some officers stated they preferred utilizing some formats of departmental intelligence over others because of its greater value, typically preferring intelligence that was more current like Command Central and the heat maps over the more general overview of Compstat or preferring intelligence directives provided directly to them by email rather than relying on

databases. For example, Officer 49 said, “A lot of that stuff we use for Command Central is the stuff were logging as COPs and stuff like that, so it’s almost departmental but I probably don’t check it as much as I should. When I do check it, I look more at the heat maps they have for crime in the area.” While many officers had mentioned the overabundance, and over-reliance, on email, some officers appreciated having the email system as it made the transfer of intelligence among, and to, officers easier. However, with all the intelligence, and access to it, other officers (17%) felt that too many sources of intelligence were provided in too many locations, which can be confusing or difficult to search. One officer said,

You know you talk about intelligence. We have so many different ways that we are absolutely inundated with information. We got guys working on getting out BOLOS and information on suspects, we got X who used to work in narcotics, we’re doing some intel related stuff, got investigators for narcotics stuff, we got sergeant Y who’s our MGI guy, motorcycle gangs, he handles the subject matter concerning that. We got our street crimes guys who are putting out information, so we got all these different places we’re getting information and now you gotta look at this ILP document. You almost feel smothered. Half the stuff I get emailed to me gets deleted. It either had no bearing on my geographic area or it’s something that gonna be covered in briefing or it doesn’t have any bearing on our department in general, but somebody felt it might be appropriate to put out there, so we’re inundated with information. And because it’s all coming from a bunch of different directions, we don’t know what were supposed to be paying attention to all the time.

Officer 52 also noted that while having all this available intelligence can be useful, it also has to be sifted through for officers to find information pertinent to them, “But if you are dealing with it and the intel coming out of it, and you’re needing to look it up or even if you just remember part of it, you can go back and look it up and say ‘Oh yeah, it’s this and this and this’ and you can put it all together. It’s very helpful. The problem is if you’re not dealing with it directly you read through it or brush through it, maybe it will stick with you maybe it won’t, it depends on if you think you’re ever going to deal with it or them. That’s the way I look at it.”

## Departmental Intelligence Operational Value

Good operational value was defined as to the degree to which the intelligence allows officers to take action, formulate an approach, or provide for some kind operational support or crucial intelligence. As officers discussed this operational value intelligence characteristics such as up-to date, purposeful, pertinent, and actionable appeared. The presence or absence of these characteristics determined officers' perceptions of the value of departmental intelligence. Officers' responses indicated that while departmental intelligence had some value, it was limited to certain situations. Thirty nine percent of officers said that departmental intelligence can provide a focus for officers on the beat, and twenty four percent of officers said departmental intelligence's operational value laid specifically in identifying trends. However, officers also noted the lack of operational value in departmental intelligence. The intelligence was perceived as too basic and needed development to be usable. They also said it was out of date, redundant, and it presented distorted data.

Thirty-six percent of officers stated that departmental intelligence required additional development by officers to be useful. Officer 60 looked at departmental intelligence as a guideline or starting point that needs the officer's expertise and input to make it truly useful,

Well to a certain extent you can look at them as engineers, what looks good on paper doesn't necessarily mean that it's gonna work. You might have to tweak something but for the most part it gives you a starting point or guideline and then we can tweak it how we see fit, to incorporate everything. Maybe the car break-ins were really popular last week but now it's burglaries so I think you have to adapt to overcome that stuff. The model itself is good in theory but officers have to be able to adapt to different situations as they arise.

While some officers commented that departmental intelligence needs to be developed to be useful, 12% of the officers, focused on how the content of the intelligence was too basic to be useful. Informing officers that there has been an increase in a certain type crime in a certain



neighborhood on a beat was not seen as valuable. Officers, by virtue of working the beat, were already aware of the crime issue and without providing more detailed intelligence on how to address it, or things or people to specifically focus on the intelligence lacked operational value,

The perception of stale data was a criticism shared by a high number of officers (32%). These officers noted that Compstat information is typically a month old when it is made available to officers and the focus it suggests may no longer be valid. For example, Officer 33 said, “Within a couple of weeks we’ll get an email from the lieutenant or the sergeant, they’ve pulled the numbers and need you to focus here on the issues but at that point it’s three weeks late and they may have already moved through or we’ve already taken ten, fifteen reports. Rather than do that, I think it’s more effective if I look at it, and identify the problem ahead of time. I know my supervisors appreciate that ‘cause by the time the [Compstat] report comes, they can say we’ve already done directed patrol there, it’s not just completely reactive, it’s a little more proactive.”

A number of officers (20%) reported relying on other, better departmental sources than Compstat. Officer 30, looked for something a little more current than Compstat, “Yeah, like when we use our hot maps that’s what I find more useful ‘cause that’s current time, it’s not what was going on last month. I’d rather have something that was going on currently rather than something that’s happening in the past that A-has already been corrected or B-it was a one or two-time incident where it’s not something to worry about anymore.”

Twenty five percent of officers said that departmental intelligence just provided redundant intelligence in that it provided information on crimes and areas to focus on that officers were already focusing on. Officers noted the information from their reports and calls were being recycled into departmental intelligence. This recycled information did not provide

officers with anything new and directed officers to do what they are already doing. For example, this officer said,

This I'll probably get me in trouble [laughs]. I know they push this intelligence policing thing, crime reports stuff. It all comes from us [laughs]. This is a regurgitation of the information that we're giving them. There just regurgitating and putting it in a nice pretty program so they can say 'Look what I did, look, this is where we're concentrating our efforts now'. Is it useful? In some cases, yes, you can look back on it and see trends and so yeah, I do use that stuff to target or pinpoint whether to spend some more time in this area today. I know this has been a hotspot over the last three years and this (inaudible) maybe I'll spend a little more time here. When it comes to that department directed intelligence very little do I put much stock in that because it's already being done.

Another 14% of officers also complained that departmental intelligence, specifically Compstat distorts crime numbers and increases in crime rates. Officers felt these numbers are used to direct officers to solve problems that, in the officers' view, may not be actual problems that increased law enforcement presence can remedy. Some officers spoke of the administration focusing on things like large percentage increases in crimes that actually do not warrant extra attention. For example, one officer said, "The Compstat that we use, I think in theory is a great system, it's a great tool, especially for larger departments, that have a vast number of crimes. But some of the tools we use, if we were in an area that has never had a vandalism before but all of sudden two windows get shot out it's going to pop up as red, and 'Holy cow, we got a huge'—vandalisms are up 200 percent in this area because we had two vandalisms."

Increases like this may be an incidental streak and not part of a trend or specific problem that needs an extra focus. Officer 54 considered that with the distortion in crime increases that may occur, that a dependence on Compstat for intelligence driven activities may not always be appropriate, "I think Compstat, they're effective when you got cities the size of Minneapolis in mind. The problem is you've got three car break-ins over a month and it's a huge problem, that's a pattern for us. Yeah, it a problem but I think the numbers get skewed, if you see that car break-

ins, we see this all the time with the numbers that get sent to us, car break-ins are up 150% this month, they from two to five or one to four. I think it gets to be a little misleading at times just because we don't have the numbers." Officers also noted that some increases in traffic accidents could be attributed to things outside of an officer's control, like traffic flow and weather conditions, and that directing officers to provide an extra presence in these areas based on Compstat numbers would have little effect on accident numbers.

This perceived lack of value may stem from officers feeling that the main providers of departmental intelligence, lieutenants and crime analysts, did not seem to understand what officers would find useful as the analysts and lieutenants were too far removed from the streets. This apparent lack of understanding seemed a source of frustration for officers. Their sentiments were similar to what Cope (2004) found in officers' reaction to crime analysts and their work product. One officer said, "...but a lot times our crime analyst will come out and say, 'Ok for these types of shops it's going to be more than likely we're gonna have between this time frame, were gonna have a break-in, and it's gonna be in this area'. And he's gonna put a box on a map that is so freakin' big that it doesn't give you any help—Ok that's my entire beat right there in that box—my entire beat right there in the box, thank you very much for letting me know crime might happen in my beat [sarcastically]. That I see as a total waste of time, I don't know what that guy does." Another officer expressed a similarly negative view about this disjuncture between crime analysts and officers,

One of the things—we have a crime analyst position... for a while we were getting emails from him and we were getting some burglaries going on and we'd get an email saying the red box is where the computer says there's a likelihood of garage burglaries on Beat Z and there's a red box around every apartment building. You're kidding! I know that! That's what I do, I know where I need to be, I don't need that computer or that person to tell me that. And then we get this same thing from our lieutenants, sending out emails saying, 'We got break-ins here, here, and here, let's get some more presence

there'. Well again, yes, I know. Yes, you're telling me but I 've been told three times now.

### **Assessment of Directed Patrol**

During the interviews 30% officers discussed directed patrol, and how it related to officers' self-initiated activities. As noted previously, departmental expectations often took the form of directed patrol mandates. These officers indicated directed patrol activities included a focus on the downtown bar close, park checks, traffic enforcement, airport checks, a focus on problem areas, and showing a presence in school zones. However, some of these officers expressed wide ranging criticism for directed patrol mandates. Directives were generally seen as unrealistic, in part because some directives may not work the same on all shifts, they decreased officer flexibility, there was insufficient time to complete the directives, and they limited their ability to engage in self-initiated activities, Directives were also seen as lacking a real examination of the issue they were intended to address, and as offering more of a PR effort and short-term effect than a real solution. Some officers said it was necessary to balance their self-initiated activities with patrol directives but other officers noted that often time patrol directives were already being performed as self-initiated activities.

Next, I provide a more comprehensive examination to a form of directed patrol known as the Beat Ops Plan (BOP). Officers were asked about their impressions of the BOPs, revealing their perceptions of its construction, purpose, utility, and value.

**BOP construction and presentation.** Officers said that BOPs were a mix of directives and suggestions that were typically constructed by lieutenants for the specific beats. Officer 32 said, "The beat ops plan? Well that's a sergeant, lieutenant, looking at where—looking at patterns of intersections where there's car accidents and things like that and then telling patrol to focus more attention on them. I don't have a problem with that. If there's somebody sitting back

and looking at the numbers that can be helpful, yeah.” Officers noted that the BOPs were typically based on Compstat statistics and did not incorporate officer feedback and input in its construction. Officer 38 said officer input was probably never considered for inclusion, “I think the original intention was to have it updated every couple weeks depending on what was going on in the city as far as calls. From that point or perspective, I don’t think patrol or the beat officers ever really had any say in it. It was more sergeants and lieutenants that were coming up with what they wanted, saying ‘Here’s what you guys can go look for’.”

Echoing a criticism about departmental intelligence in general, 15% of officers felt that the lieutenants who constructed the BOPs were unfamiliar with the beats themselves and the current reality for the patrol officer on the street. For example, one officer said, “I think a lot of the issues that are put out are put out by people that aren’t actively working the area. If they put more effort and immerse themselves into the problem I think they would understand where some of the issues are, ways we could solve the problem better. It’s kind of like we talked about at the meeting [earlier in the shift]—lead from the front, don’t sit in the office and tell us how to do our jobs when you haven’t done it in how many years. Things change so quickly in this job. I mean the things I was doing two years ago are completely different than the things I’m doing now, it’s a constant evolution.”

Officer awareness that the BOPs did not incorporate their feedback, and were constructed by administration personnel who were out of touch with the street may have contributed to officers’ perception that the BOP was poorly introduced and explained to officers. For example, Officer 41 said, “The way it came off is wrong, they should have talked to officers, it should have been a bullet point thing, ‘Here’s what I want you guys to concentrate on this month, give me your input’. That would’ve been a lot better than certain times frames I want you to patrol this

area and doing this and doing that. That would have been received a lot better and it would still be going.”

A couple officers said in their experience the BOP was presented as a checklist rather than presenting officers with suggestions. Officer 46 said, “Well, there’s different beat ops plans formulated for different areas by different people. Our area out here, instead of pinpointing things, areas to focus on, ours was more of a ‘You will do this and you will do that’ per shift to where I don’t think it was... 100% effective that way. The way they explained the beat ops plan when it was first introduced was that it would be very helpful if you were moved somewhere you weren’t familiar with so you can see this is what’s going on in the beat lately, try to focus on these areas. Out here, it was a different format than that.”

Besides dissatisfaction with the way it was presented, some officers (15%) took offense to the way it was presented and utilized by the department, clearly expressing anger and frustration in the view that the BOP was stupid, an insult to officers, as well as micro-managing officers and treating them like children. For example, this officer said, “The beat ops plan. Am I gonna get in trouble for this? (laughs) I don’t read it, it’s pointless, it’s worthless, it’s a lot of administrative crap where somebody sits down and looks at something, and they get this great idea, ‘Yeah we’re gonna make this beat op plan’ and they’re gonna tell me what I need to do on my beat? I think it’s stupid. I’m sitting here and I’m driving around and I’m working this beat. A lot of the information they give me is way old, way old or may not even be close to being useful.”

**BOP purpose.** When inquiring with officers as to their impressions of the BOP, the most frequent response regarding its purpose (39%), was that it is a tool to provide officer direction. Officer 23 said, “It, in a way, gives you some sort of direction especially if you’re new to the beat

or if it's a new area to you to give you directions, where to direct your patrol, give you some ideas of what to be doing. And also, it's a way to make sure the problems that we do have on our beat are addressed. And just give you a way to prioritize what you're doing and how you do it." Officer 62 found that it helped officers individualize their beat's problems and focuses, "I think it's good, every beat calls for different patrolling and I think it helps you with maybe having a structure of different things, kind of like a blueprint you can follow in checking your beat. Every beat has areas, different things that need work. Not everybody has stores like I do here, some are more domestics, things like that, burglaries, thefts, people who are having mental health issues. Every beat has different problems that every officer deals with."

Seventeen percent of officers also indicated its purpose was to express departmental expectations. Officer 26 explained, "I think it's a good tool to set some guidelines for your beat especially when everybody compiles all this information and it goes into that. The lieutenants might have some directives that they want done, and the sergeants might have some. The BOP just sort of lays it all out there so if you have a question about something you can always think back, take a look at it, and take the information off that. I think you can provide some better patrolling in your area." Officer 70 mentioned how those expectations can be individualized to the beat, "It does provide expectations for each beat officer on what they should be doing aside from randomly driving around...My ops plan includes traffic enforcement to include DUIs at night to mitigate crashes, barring that it's calls for service and after that it's checking on new construction sites. Those ops plan reflect those different nuances per beat."

One officer expressed how these expectations could also be limiting,

It really just paints us into a box again. They say we want you to be free with your ideas, think outside the box, and we want you to come up with your own ideas to do things but within the parameters, you still need to meet all these expectations. And don't get me wrong, we have to have expectations and we have to have guidelines so that we-we need

that guidance, we need that leadership, we need that purpose, motivation, direction, that's how you develop your people but painting them into a box and saying this is what—we already know what's expected of us as officers. We know that we need to get out, they're giving us the freedom to do that on our own time and with our own ideas and with our own ingenuity—don't give me an op plan and tell me to do what I'm already doing. It's just something you could write down so you can have something on your evaluation... I'm so fired (laughs).

In contrast to officers seeing beneficial purposes to the BOP, some officers had a more cynical view. Fifteen percent of officers said its purpose was to give lieutenants something to accomplish to demonstrate their productivity. For example, this officer said, “Beat ops is another joke. That was derived by a lieutenant that had to have something to fill their day and they came up with this great beat ops plan. They devised a plan without seeking any input from the workers who have to implement the plan.” Another officer held a similar view “I don't think it had anything to do with this is really a good tool 'cause from the very beginning everybody knew, everybody took one look at it and knew we already do that. This is just somebody else putting their name on it and saying 'Hey, look what I did'. And as soon as one person in our administration left, the ops plan went away. You don't have to be a rocket scientist to figure out what's going on there.”

Other officers (10%) held the opinion that the BOP's purpose was to provide a way to micromanage officers. This officer said, “To me, honestly, it's a joke, and it pissed a lot of people off to the fact that they're trying to micro-manage us when all the officers take such pride in their beats and their areas that they're already doing this stuff but you're putting on paper you want it from this time to this time.”

**BOP utility.** Similar to the overall view of departmental intelligence, many officers viewed the BOP as having limited utility. Whether the BOP was utilized was dependent on the



officer's experience on the beat. Many officers (32%) recognized that it had some usefulness for officers who are moved to, or have to work, an unfamiliar beat. Officer 24 explained,

If somebody is coming—like a brand new person out of the training program is assigned a specific beat, it gives them a reference point, 'Ok, I don't know anything about this beat' at least they can go somewhere and research, 'Ok I should be in these areas, or this particular area', to start with until they get a familiarization of what goes on in the beat and they can gather their own intelligence and own experience in the beat, they can use it to go in this direction a little more than over here, which the ops plan calls for, but it's a starting point for people who are not familiar with the area.

The BOP was not a frequently utilized source due in part to it currently being phased out, and thus was not being currently updated nor remained a strong focus for lieutenants, and in part to the criticisms voiced by officers. While some officers stated they use it occasionally, 14% of officers stated they have not or will not utilize the BOP, with 10% of officers feeling it is a waste of time for officers to bother with it. A few other officers had never seen a BOP or were unaware of what the BOP was.

**BOP value.** Officers also perceived BOP operational value as limited, voicing criticisms similar to those made about departmental intelligence in general; redundancy, out-of-date information, as well as being unrealistic. Nineteen percent of officers indicated it had little or no value for them on their own beat. The limitation of utility to situations where officers were on an unfamiliar beat may exist because of a perceived lack of value on an officer's regular beat, stemming to a great degree from officers (41%) viewing the BOP as redundant. The BOPs were directing officers to do activities that they were already engaging in and to focus on areas that officers were already focusing on, similar to their criticism of departmental intelligence in general. For example, Officer 22 said, "I think what they realized on their ops plans was that it's stuff we're already doing so it's almost redundant. They were basically wasting their time writing down what we should be doing when we were already doing it. So there was better time spent

focusing on something else we are aware of and help us in something new versus what we're already up to." Officer 45 expressed a similar sentiment, "The ops plan, I think the goal of it is to give references to the patrol officer, but I think the patrol officer, if he's a good one, already knows that. He already knows where the high traffic areas and crashes are, he's the one responding to the calls. So all the ops plan is to me is a combination of what all the officers are doing. They combine where we're taking our reports and doing our work and putting it in the ops plan. Most of it we already know."

Some officers, like Officer 72, expressed frustration with this redundancy, "I thought it was stupid because all the stuff in there was stuff we were already doing. And why did it need to be on paper? That's our job, we do our job, I don't understand why I need to be told how to do the job I'm already doing and if people aren't doing it than obviously you have a training failure. When those came out I was really frustrated. It just seemed repetitive, it's things that people working these areas were already doing."

Officers found other faults with the BOPs' value. While a couple officers mentioned that the BOPs had some value if they were kept updated, many more officers (37%) noted that the BOPs were typically out of date. While officers criticized Compstat as outdated, the cause was related to the lag time in producing and disseminating the information. With the BOP, updates and revision were often slow in coming or non-existent, resulting in stale information. Officer 29 said, "Well it [BOP value] depends whether or not they're updating it. The concept probably wasn't a bad idea to have some goals or areas based on Compstat numbers as to be doing things in. I'm not sure they're still doing them. The lieutenants were never updating them. The last one I had was months and months old, well that's not going to work." Officer 17 noted a similar lack of enthusiasm in keeping the BOPs fresh and up to date, "You can tell that—most of the ops

plans I've received and most of the ops plans I've been involved in initially start out good but by the third or fourth week, or third or fourth month, or third or fourth plan you get, you can tell that it's cut and pasted, 'Well let's do this, let's do that', it loses the fire, it loses the flame, and I think the overall premise of it, the foundation of it is good, I think it's something that could be useful. I think the wrong people are administering it though. You have to have buy in, you have to have participation, if you're not going to get that it's not going to do a thing."

Some officers (25%) criticized the BOP for being unrealistic and failing to take into consideration the officers' other activities and duties. By their content some BOPs demonstrated a lack of understanding of the reality of activities on the beat. For example, a BOP may direct officers to patrol a certain parking lot despite officers never having experienced calls for service or problems there. These expectations do not consider officers' available time, and their desire to focus their attention on areas that are actually experiencing problems. For example, this officer said, "There was two lieutenants who took it to an extreme...their expectations showed that they had no clue what we're doing, what we have time to do. It was so specific; they would say I expect you weekly to stop into the movie theater and talk to them about texting media or something like that, on a weekly basis... but if their expectation is that you do that weekly (chuckles), for them to think we have time to do that is just ridiculous. There's no way."

With officers having a sense of what constitutes effective and efficient patrol behavior and their desire for autonomy, their lack of inclusion or feedback in producing the BOPs may reinforce its perceived lack of value. For example, Officer 28 said, "This beat plan sits right on my desktop--I know where my construction zones are at, I know where my problems are at, I don't need a beat plan devised by a staff guy who asked for no input on it." Relying on what was

perceived to be the out-of-touch administration instead of officers to identify and solve problems on the beat was not seen as an effective approach to managing the beat. One officer said,

It's a directive on how to patrol and my disagreement with it is-who better to know how to patrol it or solve the problem than the people with boots on the ground doing it, instead of somebody sitting behind a desk, that honestly hasn't made it up to or down to that beat in months. The concept of it I think would be great if the beat ops plan were developed by the beat officers. If we had a meeting or if we were able to communicate by email and sit down and figure out these are our issues, what should we do and have the beat officers put it out, I think that would be a thousand times more effective than a supervisor saying, 'Ok this is what I want you to do to solve this problem'. Because what they're doing is just throwing numbers at problems. The results are always higher patrol, call out COP, and write tickets in that area, and that doesn't necessarily show that were solving the problem, it shows we were there trying to address the problem.

***BOP assessment by type of officer.*** The negativity expressed by officers over BOP directed patrol intelligence reflects what Collier (2006) referred to as a cultural disruption. This cultural disruption occurs because officers are asked to rely less on their own experience and informal work rules, which they perceive has served them well in their work environment, put their faith in an intelligence disseminator they view is out of touch with officers, and engage in activities that are viewed as unreasonable or ineffective. To determine whether there was any difference in views of the BOP among officer descriptive categories Officer comments on BOPs were grouped as either negative (such as having low value or being unrealistic) or positive (such as providing a focus for officers or usefulness for newly assigned officers), Officers views were relatively uniform across categories. Negative comments typically exceeded positive comments, often in excess of two to one (Figure 8). Established officers expressed the fewest negative views of BOPs (roughly half of what other officer descriptive categories expressed) though still far in excess of their positive views.

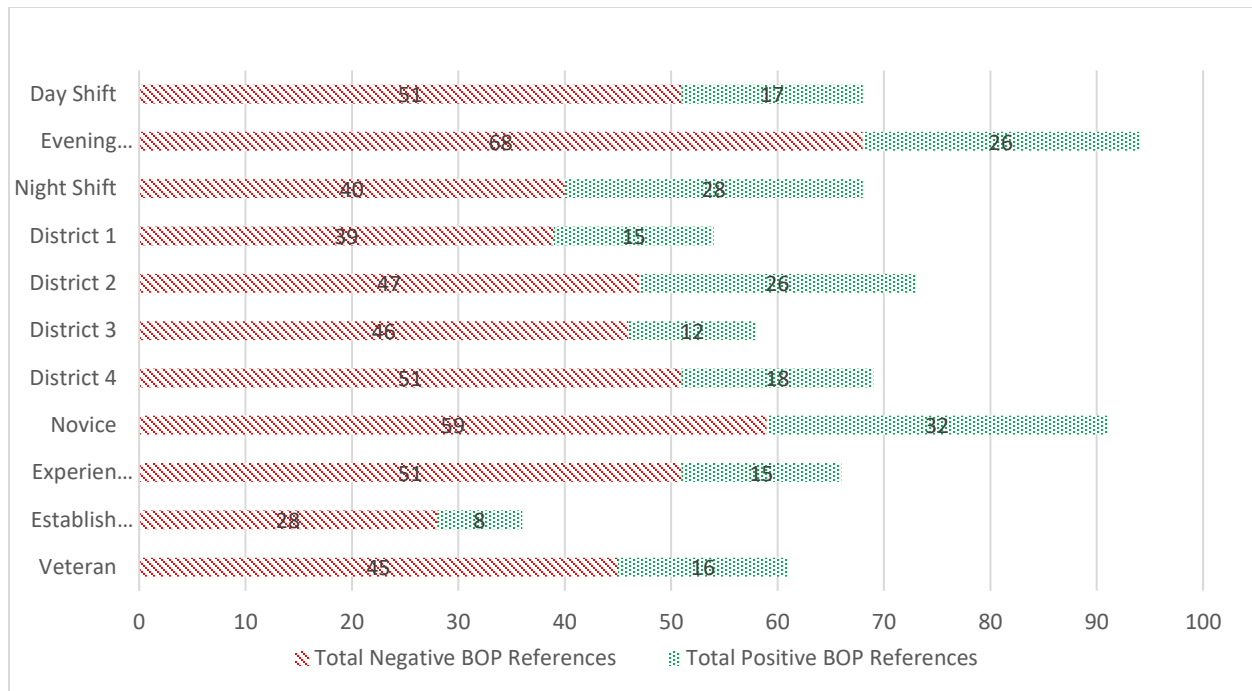


Figure 8. Positive and negative responses regarding the BOP by shift, district, and experience

### Intelligence Led Policing Utility and Value

Of the 19 officers that were asked about the ILP, 13 of them indicated they had seen the PowerPoint or were aware of its existence. Some officers who were aware of it indicated that it was quickly skimmed in briefing by the sergeant or they were informed of where its location was in the computer. Officers who had the opportunity to view the PowerPoint generally felt the information was useful and focused. For example, Officer 61 assessed the ILP this way,

I think it's helpful, a lot smarter approach. 'Cause Compstat was a lot of reporting about what happened and what you're doing about what happened, not what you could do to prevent it from happening in the future, who the big players were or where they're going, kinda planning ahead, more proactive than reactive. Compstat was reactive, this new plan I think is more practical. It's getting all the information out, and talking about efficiency, we have all the information we need to do our job but it's all over the place. Different folders here and there, there's no one place for all this information so if you can consolidate all that information into one place, that would be super-efficient. That's what's happening with this ILP is that they're bring in all this information into one PowerPoint which you can go over in a briefing and see all the big players for that week or who they want us to catch for the month. Now everybody knows or should know, it's easy and accessible in one little bundle.

A few officers raised issues with PowerPoint accessibility. The PowerPoint application was not available in the squad car computers, meaning officers would only be able to access it at the station. Officers also raised questions about how it would be continued, archived and filtered. It was unclear to these officers whether past ILP PowerPoints would be available, whether they would or could be cross-referenced with one another, or whether officers will have to retain the information pertinent to themselves. They also expressed concern over to what degree intelligence from previous PowerPoints would be incorporated in the current ILP PowerPoint.

For example, Officer 63 said,

If there was a way for us to have access to it to search by...say we got a suspect in a certain area we think could be this person, but maybe he looks like this, maybe he drives this, and if there was access so we could search and filter and narrow it down like I did with this other gal [during an investigation to identify a suspect], then that would be useful instead of just giving us a pile of information with no way to reference or refer back to it or filter it out; they're just giving us a pile of stuff that's just gonna sit there. I'll forget about it in a month.

### **Summary of Departmental Intelligence**

Generally, officers tended to have a negative perception of departmental intelligence, and much of that centered on the use of Compstat, similar to officers in Dabney's 2010 study. While officers made few references to patrol directives in the discussion of departmental intelligence, their views regarding the utility and value of departmental intelligence were similar to the negative views expressed about the beat ops plan. Officers said that departmental intelligence was constructed and provided by individuals who did not know what officers would find valuable, and the intelligence was of limited usefulness to them, typically being used in the context of getting officers updated about their beats after time off or in the identification of trends. Officers complained that the intelligence was out of date, and too basic to be effectively used without additional development. Officers preferred more specific, current forms of

departmental intelligence over Compstat. Some officers saw promise in the new format of intelligence, ILP. However, there were already indications that improvements in delivery might have been warranted and officers already identified its potential limitations.

### **Officer Intelligence Sources**

To understand how officers perceive and use intelligence it is also necessary to consider how they view and use officer-derived intelligence. In accounting for officer intelligence, it can be considered to have either been generated by the officer or passed on to that officer by other officers. Intelligence that officers generate themselves can stem directly from the activities they engage in that produces that intelligence. For example, what officers experience and engage in during an investigation can assist them in locating and developing intelligence.

Three sources of officer intelligence were examined: beat knowledge, cues and signals received by officers in their work environment, including what has been referred to as officers' sixth sense, and interaction with other officers utilizing the briefing blog, and other more interpersonal means.

#### **Beat Knowledge**

Beat knowledge was defined as a geographic knowledge of the patrol officer's beat, including layout and boundaries of the beat, quickest routes through the beat, shortcuts, out of the way places, and locations of businesses and residential areas. Furthermore, this included locations of those individuals who patrol officers termed "problem people" (that is, people who are frequently the focus of law enforcement or calls for service), locations of hotspots, locations that may require a specialized focus like school zones, and areas of emerging problems. This knowledge can be gained to a certain extent through the training process, interaction with other

officers familiar with the beat, and departmental intelligence but extensive, detailed knowledge is typically learned through time and experience on the beat.

### **Cues and Signals**

Cues and signals are defined as visual or auditory stimuli within their work environment that triggers a reaction from officers. This could include the behavior of individuals, vehicular activity, traffic patterns, and other conditions within their work environment, which for example, prompts officers to make a mental note of what they observed, investigate, or make a traffic stop. Within the realm of cues and signals is what was termed as the officers' sixth sense. Officers experience a feeling or sensation, based on what they've heard or seen, that something is "not right" during an encounter with an individual, though there may not be anything obviously wrong.

### **Interaction with Other Officers**

The other source of officer intelligence is their interaction with other officers. Officers can pass intelligence to other officers both in a face-to-face encounter and more impersonally through electronic formants like email, text messages, and the briefing blog, an electronic bulletin board where officers may post intel. Also referred to by officers as the bulletin board, officers pass along information to officers on their own shift or beat, or across the department by posting or emailing to the briefing blog. The blog portion of briefing, which was the majority of the briefing period, consisted of the sergeant reading over the blog entries that were displayed on the briefing room screen. Officer generated entries might include requests for information pertaining to "subject locates" requested by detectives or other officers, patrol officers' requests for information or for identification of suspects in photographs, updated officer intelligence or concerns, new or recurring issues on a beat, investigative or surveillance follow-up requests, and



current officer safety issues. The exchange of officer intelligence can also occur on an interpersonal level with face-to-face interactions during shift change or throughout the workday, or through text or email messages between individual officers.

### **Officer Intelligence Utilization and Value**

In discussing departmental intelligence, its utilization was dependent on officers accessing and referencing outside sources of intelligence. By contrast, officer intelligence relies on an officer's own knowledge and experience which is internally derived, and its use may be more a part of their day to day function. To add greater perspective to the overall of assessment of officer intelligence utility and value that follows, first, a more in-depth examination is given to the characteristics, utility, and value of the specific sources, along with a discussion of the value of briefing and its blog.

### **Beat Knowledge Scope and Value**

Officers' ability to utilize their beat knowledge is contingent on the scope of that knowledge. The degree that officers have developed their beat knowledge is examined here as the officer's beat knowledge, and its extent, is an area of their experience that serves both as intelligence, and can influence the generation of intelligence. When officers were asked how well they knew their beat, most officers said they had a good beat knowledge regarding aspects like routes, areas, locations, and shortcuts, and all officers stated they have an awareness of the locations of hotspots on their beat. This awareness of hotspots came from their own experience on the beat, the use of departmental intelligence, or communication with other officers. These officers' apparent confidence in their knowledge of hotspots on their beats lies in contrast with Paulson's (2004) study of hotspot information. While both Paulson's study site and the current study site provided easily accessible hotspot information, Paulson's officers fared poorly in

identifying hotspots. There were similarities between Paulson's officers and the current study in that both groups of officers tended to reference the hotspot intelligence infrequently and relied more on their own experience and information from other officers. However, Paulson's State Police officers were assessed on their jurisdiction that consisted of over 2000 square miles divided into 100 square mile beats that each contained a community, while officers in the current study referenced smaller beats that some officers had spent years on. This experience on a smaller beat may explain why Fargo officers felt they had a good knowledge of their beat's hotspots despite only infrequent reference to the department's hotspot intel. It should be noted that some Fargo officers felt their knowledge of, and effectiveness on, a different beat may suffer from the lack of experience on the beat rather than from a lack of access to hotspot information. Ratcliffe and McCullagh's (2001) study found that officers fared better in identifying hotspots than Paulson's but it was dependent on the crime type and these officers also were assessed on their own beats.

**Beat knowledge scope.** While almost half of the officers (47%) stated they knew their beat pretty well, quite a few officers (31%) expressed greater confidence in their knowledge, saying they knew it very well, akin to knowing it like "the back of their hand" and this was typically related to the time they have spent on the beat. The other officers (22%) said they were in a learning phase about their beat or noted they were trying to improve their knowledge. This officer explained, "That's part of the learning curve for me as a new recruit, part of it's exploring your beat. It's amazing how many of these little [out of the way] places there are you don't know about [that could be checked for criminal activity]. Before being assigned you drove around on the roads and you weren't looking for these spots. Something that would be important to do,

being able to figure out the best way to get places, where the problems areas probably are that I don't know about from the street.”

**Beat knowledge value.** Beat knowledge can work as a feedback loop, being both a source of intelligence and a way of developing additional beat intelligence through existing beat knowledge. While knowing the location of “problem people” and problem areas is part of good beat knowledge, thirty-two percent of officers said that having good beat knowledge allowed officers to know where their problem areas and problem people were. For example, Officer 55 said, “When I know that there’s a person that I call a problem child [how this officer referred to “problem people”] in my area and now they’re hanging out with a group of people I don’t know and they’re there all the time, obviously the problems are just gonna shift over there. With patrol, I deal with the same people, very rarely do I deal with someone I don’t know. ... it’s the same people or it’s the same associates, always. That’s just getting to know your beat and your problem stuff.” Officer 21 also mentioned using beat knowledge to find and address problems,

I know where all the apt. building complexes are, where the government housing places are, where a lot of the local, just above homeless, individuals live and reside and they all have their friends over so they're drinking in their apartments and all that stuff, so I know where those places are. So I could hang out there, drive through there. If I have somebody at [the local grocery store] here and they shoplift and take off running, depending on what some of their characteristics are, I can have a pretty good idea where they might be hanging out at. It’s just getting to know your neighborhood.

Officers also said it was important to learn the intricacies and particulars of their beat through beat knowledge. Having this knowledge allowed officers to have a focus on the beat and develop a plan, as well as make the job easier, learn about the residents on their beat, provide clues as to how to respond to certain calls, assist in investigations, and improve effectiveness and efficiency. For example, Officer 48 said, “I make it a priority for myself just to know those areas. When other people come into your area, you’re kinda expected to help direct especially in

critical incidents or incidents where multiple officers will respond...and it helps to have officers that know their beats.” Another officer also recognized the importance of beat knowledge in formulating a plan for patrol,

I've been here long enough that I know on a bright sunny day at 2:00 in the afternoon I better be downtown 'cause there's going to be a million drinkers down there. If it's a Saturday afternoon, maybe I better be by the parks 'cause they are gonna be full of people and then I'll hang out by the parks. For one thing Mom and Dad like to see ya there 'cause that way they think little Johnny is a little safer maybe, that the bad guys are gonna go away. It just depends. On evenings you're gonna be downtown for part of that, you might be by the schools depending on what's going on. You get kind of a sense for what's happening, where to be. That's not to say that you're always right by any means. You could think 'I gotta be here' and a call comes way up north and I'm five miles from where I wanna be.

A few officers said there is a benefit to having long term assignment to a beat as it allows the officer to develop more of this knowledge. Officer 24 said, “A lot of guys stay on the same beat 'cause you really get to know your areas, so if I stay on this shift, I'll keep this beat 'cause I like this area. Then you start to learn the problem areas that people tend to speed...” Officer 21 also spoke about developing this beat knowledge while also noting it enhanced recognition and contact with the public,

You get to know the area., I could drive down the street and see a car, I'm like 'I haven't seen that vehicle before', so you get an idea, just from being there so many times, that you get a pretty good sense of when something is out of the ordinary. Plus, the people get to know you which is good, they're more apt to feel like they can come up and talk to you and let you know what going on when they see you every day instead of a face that drives by in a squad car.

Not all officers agreed on this however, Fourteen percent of officers stated that long term beat assignments work against having a city-wide knowledge, so that when officers are assigned to a beat other than their regular assignment they do not have the experience and knowledge of the beat to work it effectively. Officer 23 said, “It helps having worked in the same area for quite some time whereas if you stick me out west, yeah, I'm going to be pretty lost for quite some

time.” Officer 28 voiced a similar sentiment, “That’s the other thing bad about permanent beats. I can go out in my area and damn near drive up to most places and get within a building or two [without map assistance] but out here [handling calls in a different district], I have no clue...”

With the changing cityscape, what were once familiar beats and areas to officers can now require reorientation. One officer said, “Oh yeah, I grew up on the north side so I know the whole north side, shortcuts, everything. I don’t—there’s not many I couldn’t find quickly, knowing the shortcuts. Now out west, that’s changing and growing, up north it isn’t growing out past County 20. Out west, and south, has changed totally. I used to work down south ...there’s tons of new businesses out there, tons of new homes, street names I don’t know. I’d be lost in some of those places.”

Most (86%) officers also responded that besides recognizing hotspots, they recognized or identified areas of emerging problems. I defined emerging problem areas as areas of activity on the beat that although not reaching the level of a hotspot, or being an area traditionally associated with a high number of calls for service, the officer recognized through observation or increased calls to a location there existed an emerging or growing problem that needed to be addressed. Officers who did not identify emerging problem areas explained that they either were too inexperienced on the beat to effectively recognize these areas or that the situation on their shift and beat was stable to the extent that there were no emerging problems.

Officers who recognized emerging problem areas said they tended to quickly pass the information around to other officers on the beat or to the sergeants so they were made aware of the problem, can help address the problem, and if necessary, pass information about the problem up the chain of command. Officers felt that the way to recognize these developing problems was by working the beat and continually assessing what is occurring on the beat, rather than just

looking at statistics and numbers. Officer perceptions of these developing problem areas were further explored by probing the officers who recognized and identified emerging problem areas to assess whether they felt that emerging problem areas tended to cluster around existing hotspots, in a sense being an extension of an existing problem area, or if their emerging problem areas tended to develop sporadically around the beat. Of the 46 officers asked about this, 63% saw those developing areas clustered around existing hotspots while 26% reported they tended to appear sporadically around the beat. The remaining 11% of officers stated they see evidence for both situations.

### **Cues and Signals Utility and Value**

When officers gather their own intelligence, it is prompted in part by attending to environmental cues and signals that are encountered on patrol and are typically situational. The use of cues and signals is typically contextual and their value lies in the importance their presence signals to officers. The cues serve as attentional triggers which occur during officers' activities that signal to officers to be more suspicious, investigative, or more attentive to an individual, area, or event in order to more fully assess the situation and determine the need to take action or address an issue. Their ability to pick up on these cues and signals may also assist them in identifying emerging problem areas. To understand how officers developed intelligence that helped them identify problem areas, potential problems, and situations that need their attention, officers were asked about the cues and signals that made them take notice of a situation, that raised their suspicions, or made them decide to investigate.

These cues could be seen as officers' articulations of reasonable suspicion based on officer experience, however, they function within both the context of an officer's experience and beat knowledge. An officer's experience can be the basis for the attention given to a particular

cue observed on the beat. Through their experiences, when they associate certain cues with activities, behaviors, or problems, when the cue is observed in the work environment, it prompts them to focus on that pre-established association. A less experienced officer, or a civilian, may not have developed the association between cues and the associated subsequent problems to the extent where an environmental cue triggers them into action.

The cues and signals hold meaning within the context of what officers know about their beat as well. A cue that signals the presence of something, whether typical or unusual, can only be understood within the context of what does and does not occur on the beat. Officers must have this understanding in the form of beat knowledge for the cues and signals to hold meaning for them.

**Types of cues.** A very wide range of cues were mentioned by the officers that can be grouped into the general categories of person, place, and vehicle though they were not mutually exclusive categories. Some cues applied to more than one category. For example, the biggest cue, (31%) that something needed their attention was the presence of people or vehicles that appeared to be out of place for the context, that is, people or vehicles where they should not be or where they would not be expected. For example, an officer's suspicions will be raised if they see vehicles at night in a business parking lot if the business has no overnight shift; an adult wandering around a playground, seemingly without a child of their own; or an individual loitering in an alley by a store's back door, late at night. While this was the most often referenced cue, a number of others were mentioned frequently and are listed below by percent of officers endorsing it.

- Resemblance to a prowler<sup>15</sup>-20%
- Multiple calls to a location or on a person in a short span of time-17%
- Presence of large groups-17%
- Individual attempts to avoid contact with the officer (subject will avoid eye contact, turn away from the officer, or attempt to leave the area)-15%
- Observed body language of an individual from afar-14%
- Behavior or activity that is out of the ordinary-14%
- Unusually high level of foot or vehicle traffic-14%
- Vehicle attempts to avoid the officer (quickly turns off, changes directions, or engages in evasive driving when noticing the officer)-10%
- Body language is indicative of deception when in contact with the officer-10%
- Subject is verbally evasive in answering questions-10%
- Anyone out at night-8%
- Results of profiling-7%

While only mentioned by four officers, the results of profiling as a cue to problematic or suspicious situations bears some additional explanation. While mentioning it in response to cues that trigger suspicion or activity, the profiling and its results involve to a great degree officers' beat knowledge and their use of intelligence. Officers did not refer specifically to *racial* profiling and in my observations, I did not see any officers exhibit any biased speech or actions nor did I observe them make any investigative decisions that appeared to be based

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<sup>15</sup> An individual wearing dark clothes, carrying a backpack, walking, or riding a bike with no light, at night in a residential area was mentioned very frequently by officers as an individual that may likely be a prowler.



on race or ethnicity. Rather, officers referenced profiling in the context of utilizing what is known about a geographical area, including the demographic makeup such as race and ethnicity, age, and SES, and what is known about residents and the most likely offenders that reside in a particular area. This information can serve as a cue that focuses and narrows their investigative efforts. The information officers use comes from both departmental and officer intelligence. The department provides the records and databases that allow officers to reference past similar incidents, and the individuals involved, as well as current criminal trends. Officers also rely on their beat knowledge and their time and experience patrolling, answering calls on the beat, knowing who their “problem people” are, knowing what kind of people on their beat that may be involved in certain crimes, and possessing information from investigating and gathering intelligence from past incidents on the beat. One officer said, “There’s a lot of ethnic people there, new Americans, and to be perfectly frank, there’s some profiling that goes on, it happens, but if we’re not doing that then we’re not doing our job the best we can because it’s no secret in some areas who the problem makers are. And people [in our society] feel differently about that, you can take it for what it’s worth.”

However, the inclusion of race and ethnicity may label such behavior as racial profiling (Ramirez, Farrell, and McDevitt, 2000). In the recent past, racial profiling was defined as using race “as a *key* [emphasis added] factor in police decisions to stop and interrogate citizens” (Weitzer and Tuch, 2002, p.1), However, a more current academic viewpoint defines it simply as “the use of race or ethnicity, or proxies thereof, by law enforcement officials as a basis for judgement of criminal suspicion” (Glaser, 2014, p. 3). meaning that if officers consider race or ethnicity as one of the factors in making a decision to investigate, make a traffic stop, or conduct a field contact they have engaged in racial profiling.

Another officer explained,

I mean there's definitely profiling. I mean we profile on our job all the time, it's not just based on race though some of it could be that, if it's primarily-- like this neighborhood here is a primarily white, well to do neighborhood. If I see a group of lower class people, just based on their dress, walking through this area, that to me is a pretty big cue. It's not a guy in a suit walking a dog, and I should be focusing on them because they don't really belong in that neighborhood and in this case we're getting some backlash from the apartments over here, they know that's where they're coming from or they're coming into the area to specifically target the area and so developing that profile, knowing your neighborhood and knowing what doesn't fit is the biggest part of it.

In this particular account, while the officer recognized that race may be a factor in developing a profile of what belongs in a neighborhood or area, other factors may come into play like SES in developing an investigative focus. Another officer saw profiling, despite the negative connotations, as the core of law enforcement. Knowing, or trying to determine, who the “problem people” are, or where the problem areas were, or what things did fit into an area, in order to focus your efforts, was effective policing in this officer's view.

It kinda gets into profiling, looking for certain kinds of vehicles, certain demographics, I mean I got all these nice neighborhoods I'm never called to and where we were just driving on Beat V, we get a lot of calls there. Profiling has such a negative connotation lately but I mean that's really the basis of law enforcement is knowing what areas you're going to be more successful and fruitful in finding crime. And it doesn't mean that I don't drive through some of these areas like X and Y [upscale neighborhoods], I will go through those areas but I don't spend much time there 'cause we get about one burglary a year or one unauthorized car entry theft a month. I just took a vandalism on [Beat] Z where three vehicles had their windows smashed out with rocks, it's not uncommon in that area, it would be very uncommon in those upscale areas.

The negative connotations, referred to by the officer, surrounding profiling suggest that profiling is an example of either overt or implicit bias towards a segment of the population, usually minorities (Tomaskovic-Devey, Mason, and Zingraff, 2004; Banks, Eberhardt, and Ross, 2006). The officers in this study tried to draw a distinction between this negative connotation of profiling and efficient and effective patrol work by indicating that race *could* be one of a number of factors in developing a profile. This may be more of a practitioners' viewpoint in that they are

trying to engage in what they believe, through experience, is effective and efficient police work. As Barlow and Barlow (2002) contend, “Many police officers view racial profiling as an appropriate form of law enforcement. Although they might not use the term *racial profiling* to describe what they do, police officers participate in this practice because they believe it is precisely what their supervisors and the majority public want them to do.” (p. 4). While officers in the study tried to downplay race as a factor in forming profiles, the content of some their statements also indicated they were cognizant that race may be a factor in their profiling.

If officers do not believe they are inappropriately focusing on segments of the population, they may perceive there is a lack of bias in their investigative work. For example, Harcourt (2004) stated that using race in policing is legitimate and constitutional if it is a narrowly tailored policing technique that reduces the profiled crime in an efficient use of police resources and does not including a ratcheting effect on the profiled population, that is, when a supervisory effect on the profiled population is disproportionate to the distribution of the offending of the racial group (p.6). If officers in this study were utilizing race or ethnicity, or other characteristics, like SES, age, or gender, in an effort to narrow their investigative focus they may consider it proper when its use constituted efficiency and effectiveness in policing while not disenfranchising the portion of the population that have those characteristics. However, the extent of officer action as it contributes to a perception of disenfranchisement, may be subjective. For example, a large police presence in a neighborhood or area or heavily focused investigative efforts directed toward the group in question may not be perceived as disenfranchisement by law enforcement but as a focused effort to address an incident or problem. However, this may be perceived as disenfranchising by neighborhood residents or the members of the targeted group (Maher and Dixon, 2001).

Despite such behavior being labeled racial profiling in the criminal justice literature, in an effort to engage in efficient and effective policing these officers expressed that they should consider all the characteristics that might be a factor in developing intelligence and narrowing their investigative focus, including race. In these officers' view, considering race in developing an investigative focus or recognizing it as a factor associated with certain criminal activity doesn't automatically mean that bias was involved. Rather, officers stated they are trying to utilize the information available to them to address criminal activity. As one officer said, "I think you can profile people and I'm not saying all black people commit crimes, that's not what I'm talking about. I think that if somebody is doing something and they just happen to be like that [of a particular race or ethnicity] then that might be your problem and issue, but I'm just trying to stop a crime before it happens. I don't really care what color you are, purple, black, or blue, whatever, you're here in an area you probably shouldn't be in and you're doing something."

***Sixth sense definition and origins.*** During the discussion of cues and signals, 21 officers (36%) made reference to their "sixth sense", gut feelings, their "Spidey sense"<sup>16</sup> or that feeling of just knowing something's wrong. Worrall (2013) described this sixth sense as a predilection toward experiential thinking over a rational thinking approach. This feeling of a sixth sense which functions as a subconscious cue for officers may be related to both their beat knowledge and their law enforcement experience. Though not a part of the interview questions, when officers mentioned terms like those above the researcher probed the officers to elicit details around the actual feeling itself, such as when they experienced it and how it was expressed.

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<sup>16</sup> Referring to the comic book character Spiderman's ability to sense impending trouble.

Some officers had a hard time describing the sensation while other officers described it in terms of an adrenaline dump, a feeling of hypervigilance, anxiety or nervousness, or a subconscious awareness of danger cues. For example, Officer 37 said, “I joke about that sixth sense you have as an officer where something just doesn’t seem right, like you can’t put your finger on it. I think a lot of us have it where it’s like ‘That doesn’t look right, I don’t know exactly what they’re doing but I should go check on it’ or somethin’ is telling me to go this way or that way...”. Officer 61 described the feeling generated by the context of the situation,

I would compare it to an anxious—I don’t think anxiety is really the word but you can kinda feel it like something’s going on here, things aren’t adding up, I need to get to the bottom of this. Maybe not all situations but definitely where there’s already that stress, maybe somethings going on, you’re looking for...so it is an anxious feeling, something going on, should I arrest this guy—if I get a feeling in my gut I gotta trust my gut.

The activation or feeling typically stemmed from the behavior of an individual the officer came in contact with. Something an individual said or did, or some sort of visual cue that the officer felt was not normal, elicited that physical/psychological reaction from the officer, in a sense causing warning bells to ring. Officers could react to this sixth sense by probing an individual with further questions if their suspicions are raised or to take steps to insure officer safety if they perceived a threat. Officers also noted that sometimes a particular vehicle or the content in a dispatch may also elicit that sixth sense feeling of something being wrong or the presence of a problem.

As officers discussed this sixth sense, many of the triggers seemed tied to the officers’ experiences. Through their time on the job, they had become adept at recognizing statements, activities, and behaviors that did not make sense or fit within the context of the situation. This subconscious recognition triggers a reaction from the officer. During the interview, Officer 60 elaborated on both the sixth sense feeling and triggers for it,

Interviewer: How does it feel when you get that sense that something isn't right? Is it apprehension, is it nervousness, is it tension, the adrenaline starts to flow or ...”

Participant: It’s all of the above. You start getting nervous, and I’ll tell people ‘Hey quit putting your hands in your pockets, you’re making me nervous dude, just calm down otherwise you’re gonna end up going in handcuffs’. Yeah, absolutely your adrenaline starts kicking in, nervousness starts kicking in, your heart-rate, you can feel your heart beat a little faster, anxiety kicks in a little bit, all those things kinda play into how you’re reacting. You’re not gonna get nervous around a grandma but when you deal with someone with prison tattoos all over their body and some are obvious gang tattoos, you’re gonna be a little more on edge than you would be dealing with grandma or grandpa. You’re just looking for those kind of things [...or] the old felony stretch, when they start tying their shoes up or pulling their pants up a little tighter you know they’re probably gonna start running. Yeah, all that stuff plays in, you’re exactly right, it all plays in.

Officers differed in their views as to where the sixth sense originated from, either in a specific personality trait of the officer, a generalized trait that is developed through work experience, or a combination of both. Many officers who referenced this sixth sense (33%) felt it originated in a personality trait. A few officers, like Officer 50, mentioned that officers cannot be specifically trained to develop that sixth sense, “I think if you don’t have the skills at all, and it’s kinda like being a hunter and tracker, if you just don’t have that at all, this job isn’t—you can’t really—you can try and learn this job and you can try and make it better but if you just don’t have those skills—it’s like trying to teach a basset hound to be a bird dog—he doesn’t have the legs or skills to do it, he doesn’t want to do it—I don’t know if that’s a great example or not...I think it’s the same way with cops.”

In contrast, many officers (54%) said the sixth sense developed on the job through experience. The more officers observed body language and deceptive and suspicious behavior and speech, the more in tune they became to this sixth sense. Officer 61 related this about the sixth sense during the interview,

Definitely in the last two years, year to two years, I’ve noticed a hyper-sensitivity to body language, like how people act when they talk. And I didn’t notice it at work, I noticed it away from work where I’d ask people questions whether on extracurriculars or at home

and people would tell me stories and I'd say you're lying. 'Well how do you know?' People lie to me every day, you know the signs of how people lie, how they talk, if they're lying they may say something a certain way or omit something, knowing how a person would say it. That's developed thru experience. Can anyone do that? I don't think so. There's definitely a set of skills that makes you a good cop so maybe you're able to pick up those cues, or the intelligence isn't there, I haven't thought much about it but I gotta imagine other cops have it.

Other officers felt that patrol officers must have the ability to be sensitive to that sense of impending trouble, and that while everyone has it, civilians would not develop it the same way officers do, as well as feeling those individuals who enter law enforcement may be predisposed to having that sixth sense. Officer 40 said,

I think to a certain extent we all have that, at least those who have a mindset... 'cause not everyone has the mindset or the willingness to do it. It can be stressful and so not everybody is made for it. So I think to a point I had it yet you develop it better too as you go. You get to know more people, you get to know how people react, body language, better, 'cause that's what you're focused on. So you just grow into it but yet you have to have some initial quality to that otherwise you wouldn't be able to be an officer anyways. So I think it's a mix, you're born with it but yet you have to improve it otherwise it can go away too.

In summary, officer beat knowledge as a form of officer intelligence centered around extensive beat knowledge gained from extensive experience. With a strong knowledge of their beat officers were able to identify hotspots, areas of emerging problems, who the problem people were, and where the problematic activities were occurring. This knowledge influenced and focused their patrol and investigative activities. Their experiences both as a patrol officer and on their beat helped them recognize cues and signals to emerging problems or suspicious activities and officers used these cues to develop intelligence on, or to address, specific problems or situations. While officers put great stock in their own experience, officers can also use other patrol officers as a source of intelligence.

## **Interaction with Other Officers Utilization and Value**

Officers also obtain intelligence through their interactions with other officers. This can take place more impersonally through the use of the briefing blog, also referred to as the bulletin board, where officers pass along information to officers on their own shift or beat, or across the department by posting or emailing to the briefing blog. The blog postings from officers (and the department) are then read through by sergeants during briefings. The exchange of officer intel can also occur on a with face-to-face interactions or with email messages between individual officers. This dissemination of intelligence can enhance or hamper the availability and understanding of the intelligence provided and thus affect whether officers will utilize the intelligence or find it valuable. The following sections examine the value that officers put on the briefing blog, whether they can utilize officer meet-ups within their shift structure, and the value that officers find in these meet-ups in contrast to electronic means of communication between officers.

**The briefing blog value.** By virtue of its incorporation into briefing, officers were exposed daily to this intelligence source. While the blog acted more as a conduit for the transmission of departmental intelligence directives, it was also a more direct way for officers to communicate, albeit in a less personal way than email or text. Twenty percent of officers mentioned the blog as a useful way to communicate intelligence among officers. It allowed them to quickly disseminate detailed information to multiple officers as well as upload photos for identification purposes. Important information could be passed on to the next shift in this manner when officers did not have the opportunity to pass on this information face-to-face. For example, Officer 14 said, "...let's say I got a stolen vehicle report, I'll go to the bulletin board and I'll put stolen vehicle North Dakota John Lincoln John 454 for plate number, if located please contact..."



so that's how we use our resources, 'Hey so and so has made threats he'll shoot an officer if they come to his door, he lives at blah, blah, blah', that's the good intelligence we like to see, warning signs."

During briefing, officers can ask for clarifications as well as offer their own input and intelligence related to the blog entry under discussion. Officers from other shifts, beats, and districts may have obtained or gathered information related to the blog entry discussion, which can enhance the utility and value of the intelligence. One officer said, "We also have what's called the bulletin board, it's the stuff that's going on throughout the day that's still getting investigated, all stuff that are-stolen cars, all the time, missing people, all this stuff so if it doesn't happen on your shift, you typically won't know about it unless it's put on that bulletin board and before every briefing, like you saw, we go over it so you know, have an idea, what's going on so you—otherwise I'd have had no idea—I wouldn't have talked to the guy who arrested that purse snatcher that he's actually in jail or his accomplice was in jail [referring to information mentioned by another officer during briefing]"

The blog allows officers to share information across shifts and beats, which keep officers aware of newly developed intelligence, ongoing issues, and trends, which is especially helpful when they are assigned to an unfamiliar beat. One officer said,

...when things happen between the shifts and it's not communicated in the briefing or on the bulletin board, night shift is not going to know that days took that burglary report. So it's important to share that information between shifts, otherwise it kinda gets compartmentalized. We handle our business from this time to this time, and the other shift handles it from that time...ya know what I mean? Then you kinda lose that knowledge of what's going on in your beat area, 'cause they operate all the time, across shifts, so it's hard to identify trends that occur across shifts if you're just paying attention from 10:45 to 7:45 every night. I think it's huge.

However, a couple of officers also commented they felt that the blog was useless. These officers felt that the blog lacked value as it too often contained information that was irrelevant to

them, and overly detailed, extraneous information rather than to-the-point intelligence. Consequently, these officers tended to ignore the blog portion of briefing and did not reference the information on it very often. Officer 60 said, "...sometimes too much information can be overwhelming. You got officers that put stuff in the bulletin board that doesn't need to be in there. It takes you all night to read that, it's a lengthy email or lengthy post on the bulletin board, I'm not gonna take the time to read it. Short, sweet, to the point. I don't need to hear some of the stuff people put in the bulletin board, it's boring, it's not really anything we need to be concerned about." Another officer expanded on some of the shortcomings of the briefing blog, "I think our briefing predominantly is a joke... 'cause sometimes there's stuff on there that's very important but you're sitting there listening, 'Ok, Mrs. Jones is gonna be out of town next week and she'd like officers to drive by her house some. We got a report up there there's some graffiti on the bridge'. You listen to a few of those and by the time you get to the one that talks about 'Hey, officers dealt with this guy yesterday and he had a gun', I think it's natural for anyone to start to lose interest and you're probably not paying as much attention as you should."

Some of these officers preferred a more personal exchange of information. For example, officer said, "The blog stuff, I don't pay a whole lot of attention to that unless it's officer safety or anything like that. Command Central and Compstat is just—I don't think it's that great of a big deal either. Officer-to-officer to me is huge." This officer also preferred a different format and more inter-officer contact,

I think the bulletin board is just a big joke in my mind. You feel like you have to put things out there and 90% of the people listening in briefing don't read the shit anyway. Our job is to communicate face-to-face so why have we implemented these systems where you get away from doing that and want you to read a computer system. I mean what happened to the old briefings where you sit and talk, and you'd say this is what we're looking for. I mean you have this big computer system because someone in the administration wants to say 'Oh, look what I developed'. I mean I could care less—the

briefing for our PD is the biggest waste of time and sucks the life out of you more than anything.

I saw evidence of both briefing views, as well as having gained an understanding of how these views can develop, during the time I spent in briefings. While the officer above contends very few officers pay attention to the briefing blog, during the sergeants' blog readings I observed some officers very actively paying attention during the briefing; taking down information in notebooks, like suspect descriptions and behavior, or license plate numbers and descriptions and details of stolen vehicles. However, I observed other officers who appeared distracted or bored during the briefing as well. Some of this inattention may be attributable to how the blog is constructed and presented.

A large portion of the briefing is spent on the blog. Some of this information is geared toward specific officers, beats, or districts and it may not be very pertinent for some officers, which contributes to the disinterest that some officers expressed in the blog during briefing. If there are few new additions to the blog, the existing blog entries tended to reference numerous times in the briefings over a few days and so get to be somewhat repetitive. While this may be necessary so that officers on different work schedules can be brought up to date, as that same information is repeated from shift to shift from day to day, it can become easy to tune out as the sergeant repeated this information. For example, I observed officers' attention go down, as well as my own, after hearing the same information about the same stolen scooter, or looking at the same blurry surveillance video still, day after day, during briefing.

**Utilizing officer interactions.** Because officers are an important part in transferring intelligence, they were asked whether they try to meet with the officer on the oncoming shift so they can brief them, that is, passing along important information to the oncoming officer and apprise them of what has been occurring on the beat. This can occur during shift change between

day and evening shift officers, and night and day shift officers. It can also occur during the shift overlap between evening and night shift officers. During shift change, the beat officer who worked the previous shift could meet with the oncoming beat officer to brief them on activities on the beat and pass along intelligence that might have been gathered or that might be found useful.

In reality, there was a limited time frame for most officers to do so. Typically, the day shift officers will be coming into the station at the end of their shift while the evening shift officers are in briefing. Day shift officers will often not have the opportunity to meet with the evening shift officer unless they share a car with them. Day shift officers are typically finishing reports or getting ready to go home when evening shift officers leave briefing who typically go straight to answering the holding calls for service. Fifty-seven percent of the day shift officers stated they do not meet with the evening shift officer on their beat and therefore rely on electronic communication. While some officers stated that they try to meet face-to-face with the evening officer if they have something important to relay, most of the day shift officers relied on the blog or emails to pass along information and intelligence to the next shift to some extent.

Evening shift officers typically had the opportunity to meet face-to-face with the night shift officers on their beat because of the shift overlap, and evening shift officers would either make a point of setting up a meeting with the night shift officer (68%), especially if something important needs to be passed on, or, because they are frequently dispatched to calls together, the evening shift officer will brief the night shift officers when they meet on a call. Night shift officers encountered a similar situation to day shift officers at the end of the shift: they were focused on finishing work and getting home and have typically left the station by the time day shift finished briefing. These officers also typically rely on electronic communication rather than

face-to-face communication, unless they had to pass on something very specific and important, with 69% of night shift officers saying that do not have a face-to-face meeting with the day shift officers.

**Officer interaction value.** In discussing officer interactions 26 officers expressed a preference in communicating either through a face-to-face interaction or through an electronic mean, like email or texts. Seventy three percent of those officers preferred a face-to-face interaction, and while another 15% of those officers said that both format have their own advantages, only one officer preferred electronic communication. Officers said advantages in face to face communication came from its more immediate, dynamic nature. For example, it allowed them to pick up on nuances, and ask questions in real time. For example, Officer 29 said,

If I have something to pass on I'd much rather pass it on firsthand then to send you an email, 'Hey, can you do this or can you look for this person'. It's much easier to talk to people in person, if they have any questions, want more detail, whatever, than to send an email. Same with nights, if you're getting in there on time, they're around to talk to us after briefing. There's a much better chance of understanding the information when you can do it that way. A lot of times you may do that [send an email] but you'll send it out to the whole beat or in some cases the whole district depending on what the circumstances are so that everyone's aware of it.

Officer 20 also said face-to-face communication is useful for clarification and speed of response, "Well one thing, I can ask them immediately any questions that I might have 'Well I don't understand this, what happened with this?' and he can tell me, whereas if I get an email, I have to send him an email back and then I have to wait half a day for him to come back to work or three days if he's on his three days off for him to get back. I just don't like the lack of personal contact with email". Other officers also found fault with the email system, finding it both impersonal and over-used, an oft repeated complaint throughout the current study.

While some officers recognized the enhanced quality of face-to face communication as well as having expressed a preference for face-to-face communication, officers also recognized that shift structure and call volume, made electronic communication necessary. For example, Officer 59 said, "...the electronic is about the only way you can do a lot of things., You're not gonna see the people who work on evening shift or night shift, but if they leave a note or something on the bulletin board about this is what happened here or there, then that's good. But if you're working with another officer, that's better, when you can be face-to-face like that."

### **Assessment of Officer Intelligence Utilization and Value**

In their discussion of the sources of officer intelligence, officers indicated how these sources came into play during their patrolling and contacts with citizens as well as revealing the characteristics and specific value they find in certain types of sources. Officers have already suggested they find value in information that is both dynamic and that comes from experience on the beats. Now the discussion turned towards how often they utilize officer intelligence in general and how they assessed the value of that intel.

**Officer intelligence utilization.** Many officers (36%) indicated they used it frequently and some said they relied heavily on the intelligence they developed. For example, Officer 33 spoke about the high degree of utility in sharing information back and forth between officers,

That to me is huge. I would say 95% of what I do is run off that [officer-derived] intelligence... when I was up on Beat D, it's highly residential and with Officer X on the evening shift, between the two of us, we knew everything that was going on. We don't work together very often, 2 days a week, but when we did it seemed like the gaps in what I didn't know about what was going on, he knew that. And we would share that between us to the point where we would have everything covered. Very effective I thought.

Officer 53 also mentioned having a high degree of dependency on intelligence developed personally and the necessity of trying to find a way to pass intelligence around to other officers, "I rely a lot on what I experience during my shift and what I pass on to the other shifts. I don't

know what a good method is, I think it's just happening by luck 'cause I don't think we have a real good way to do that. I guess the only way that we could use that bulletin board at briefing-- but I don't know how it's being used, I don't know how it happens--but I rely on that 95 % of what I need to be doing and what I need to be worried about."

A number of officers (15%) also noted that they tended to pay attention to officer intelligence when it was presented because it served as an active "heads up" to officers; something, that by virtue of it coming from other officers, warranted an officer's attention and assessment as to its value. For example, this officer said, "If it's something that if another officer working day shift says we've had a problem with this address today, it doesn't necessarily mean I'll do extra patrol in that area. It's just more so an awareness if we get called there, we know that we've been there and why. Now if a night shift officer says 'Hey', or if it's on the board, 'this address in Courtview, we're looking for this, people have been coming and going, drive by and get some additional information if you can', I'll do some extra patrol in that area, keep an eye on it for activity, watch for those kinds of things." Officer 70 also discussed being able to take cues from other officers and using this information to help direct patrol, "I think when it comes up it has a little more bearing, especially when it pertains to the beat. If Officer X or Y comes to me and says they're having a problem with this particular individual, or this particular address, or this particular area right now, 'These are the reports I took today', or the last couple of days, that kinda tells me the area I need to pay special attention to until they tell me it's not an issue, then I probably won't pay attention to that area for a while. I think that has more effect on how I patrol then the department generated stuff." Officer 32 also saw officer intelligence as being more useable because officers have a good grasp of what might be valuable intel,

As far as officer generated, it usually a bit more effective because cops deal with so many people on a nightly basis, stop and ID people, talk to people... I think that's better

information, higher quality information... good intelligence has to start with the patrol officers, because we're the ones out there seeing it and dealing with it. Now when it goes up [to the administration], it gonna be sorted in some manner when it comes back down to everybody else. But I believe all the intelligence has to start out on the street.

Some officers (10%) said that the degree to which they utilize other officer intelligence can depend on the reliability of the source. For example, Officer 52 said, "Some people are bullshitters, some people are straight up. So it all depends on the personality, how well you know them. You work with that many people you see, like any other place, the good, bad, and ugly, of workers." Officer 25 said, "I guess it all has to depend on where you get the information from. Do you know this officer to be credible source, have you had success with their information in the past? So like I said, I've found people who work, who do their reports, that speak well with others, so I guess I sort of filter it that way."

Some officers said that other officers sometimes include extraneous information in the blog and in their direct communications with other officers. This officer said he preferred officers coming to the point, "To be honest it depends on the officer... if you can't tell me in 15 seconds, I don't want to hear it. 'Cause after 15 seconds, I've lost my attention span listening to your jibber jabber. Give me the facts. And if I got officers on my beat that I know— boom, boom, boom—I get the facts and I'm out of there. Those are the guys I wanna talk to and hear from. The guys who jibber jabber about everything, send me a fax or email, I'll read it that way."

**Officer intelligence operational value.** In general, officers placed high value on officer intelligence. Nineteen percent of officers said intelligence is simply better when it comes from "working" officers as they have a direct knowledge of what is occurring on the street. Officers describe officer intelligence as having a great deal of operational value for a number of reasons; while some officers mentioned its quick accessibility and its ability to keep officers updated to changing situations on the street, many officers saw it as valuable because it was specific and



actionable (41%), timely and pertinent (20%), and could quickly identify trends occurring on the beat or district (19%). When intelligence was specific and actionable it provided detailed information that officers could actually act upon, in that it could be utilized to formulate an action or response. For example, this officer said,

It's little more detailed as well, we know people by name, we're dealing with a problem person or persons, we can come up with an action plan to address them. What enforcement are we going to take, you and I are the ones who deal with this, we're working the evenings, both of us working evenings, any evening call at that time we're gonna take it, so what's are stance gonna be on this? Are we gonna try to give him a break at first, try to let 'em figure it out or are we gonna take the hard stance and try to put in for eviction or what are we gonna do? It was very effective when we do that.

Officers also valued up to date information and officer intelligence could provide fresh information or real-time intelligence that can be applied to current situations, could use to effectively assist other officers, or change their patrol behavior. Officer 72 said,

Most of that information is happening now so if I get a chat message that 'So and so was walking down X Street, I don't know where he went, you wanna come help search the area?' I know this guy was last seen in this area, it's good information, so we can focus on that area to get the guy. Like in briefing, there was that red truck where the guy is wanted for felony theft, he's at [specific address], I don't know if you heard [officer] X, he said he drove by there yesterday and he didn't see the truck. I mean he's changing what he's doing because he's seeing this information on the blog, so he's gonna drive by that address maybe two, three times today, or he might after briefing and then in the morning to see if this guy's around and then pass that information on to the rest of the shift to try and corner this guy and get him. I guess I rely heavily on that information; I find it more useful.

Officer 49 said officer intelligence worked well with the quickly changing environment on the street, "I'd say it's a lot better. It's more dynamic, it's developing through the night even. It could be somebody who posts a chat that I'm looking for this person, they're last seen in this area and that gives me a reason to go patrol that area, to go look for that person or vehicle... it is almost kind of a night to night thing. Like during briefing I'll write notes down on my daily roster and I kinda keep them for the week, and eventually throw them away, but just looking day

to day at my sheets there's probably only one thing that's consecutive two days in a row, that I've written down as a note."

Officers benefitted from the rapid development of intelligence as the more direct back and forth sharing of intelligence between officers was useful in keeping them apprised of current situations. Officers noted this back and forth sharing was also occurring between patrol and other units like narcotics and investigations as well. One officer said,

Stuff that's valuable information, like our gang task force or the gang unit they are--they send out a lot of good people of interest, people I don't necessarily know about 'cause they're not in my area but that doesn't necessarily mean I'm not interested in those people, sometimes you'll have other officers say 'Hey, look out for this guy, he's got a warrant' or something, you don't know if he'll be walking thru the mall or at some restaurant or bar I walk thru. He's not generally in my area but that information is valuable to me 'cause I don't deal with those people on a daily basis like some of the other officers do...

Officer intelligence also allowed officers to identify trends before Compstat. Because officers are on the street, taking the calls and doing the reports, and this activity is typically relayed more directly to other shift and beat officers, officers can share their information back and forth and begin to draw connections, and see patterns and trends, rather than waiting for the monthly Compstat report. Officer 21 said, "If it's statistics it takes time 'cause they only do those things at the end of every month. It used to be just monthly so you'd be being told about a crime wave a month after it happened and then expect to take some action about it. With the blog, now you can see what happened in your area last night or as soon as the reports are done and entered so it's pretty quickly you're aware of what is going on in your areas, if there's any trends and so forth. It's more immediate chances of taking some action now than it used to be. Which is a good thing in my opinion."

There were some negative aspects of officer intelligence. Fourteen percent of officers said the quality of the source was a factor in its value. With too much extraneous information,

the intelligence became too much to sort through to find pertinent information and was seen as having a lower value, a view expressed by this officer during the interview,

Participant: It depends on who it's coming from to be honest with you.

Interviewer: Does some of that intelligence have better operational value than others?

Participant: Yes, some of it's just—I talk to the person and there's no criminal intelligence behind it, it's just that this person was out here at this time, there's really no backing as to what the person was doing or why I should be focusing on him so some of the intelligence we get is not as useful as others.

Fifteen percent of officers also noted that while officer intelligence is more immediately actionable, it also has a short period of usefulness. While some intelligence is stored away by officers, mentally or in writing, for later reference, officer intelligence is often related to a current or developing problem or issue that requires more immediate action or attention, for example, attempting to locate an individual, officer safety, conducting follow-up and investigations, or in the development of a larger plan of action. Typically, the intelligence is utilized quickly to achieve a goal. If it is not used, the situation it applied to may have been resolved or changed, thus changing the value of the intel. Officer 62 related how this may occur,

Interviewer: Does it usually seem like it's [officer intel] for a greater immediate use than say beat ops. Does it seem like officer intel has a shorter freshness date...?

Participant: I would say it's more of a quick action. They saw John Smith here and when officers tried to approach him he took off running but we're sure he's trying to steal stuff, you got probably two, three days to find him again.

Interviewer: But a week later, that kind of stuff, who knows where he's gone...

Participant: He's gonna move on to a different area 'cause he knows police are hot on him. So yeah you got a couple days window where you can maybe catch him, find him.

The ability to act within that short time frame benefited from officers passing on information in a timely manner and suffered from things like high call volume. Officer 54 said,

It is a lot more so specific. A common one that gets put up there is 'I took a domestic report and here's the suspect'. You usually have twelve hours, if you can find that person in twelve hours, you can arrest, so that can be very helpful. The problem is most of the time, officers on the next shift probably won't actively look for him, they're not gonna go back to the address more than likely 'cause they won't have time. If they get called to the address, they still have the information about what was going on if they do happen to deal with the person, so that part is a little more useful I think, some of the more specific things. Or I'll do this a lot. At the end of my shift, if I been to a house a few times for fighting, I'll stick my head in briefing and say, 'Just so you know we been to this address twice today for people getting out of control, you'll probably be back, here's what we've done so far'.

In summary, officer intelligence, with some caveats, was viewed favorably. Officers indicated they relied heavily on officer intelligence in their activities., By virtue of the officer being the source of intelligence, they assigned an importance or gave specific attention to its content. Officers, however, recognized that patrol officers were an imperfect source and that intelligence was given more attention if the source officer was viewed as reliable.

Officers described officer intelligence has having a high operational value, considering it actionable, specific, pertinent, and timely. Officers also recognized that while officer intelligence had value and was utilized frequently, because of its specificity, especially in information shared between officers, its importance was often short lived, typically only lasting until the immediate problem had been solved.

### **Comparison of Departmental and Officer Intelligence**

During the interviews, officers' preferences for, and assessments, of both officer intelligence and departmental intelligence become apparent. Officers typically held officer intelligence in high regard because the information it provided was current and able to be effectively utilized to accomplish a goal or assist in their tasks while departmental intelligence was seen as having limited utility and value, more often useful for familiarization with an area than for a resource that would assist in accomplishing the day to day patrols and investigations.

Officers mentioned utilizing officer intelligence more frequently and sometimes giving precedence to officer intelligence over departmental intelligence.

Officers were also asked directly to comparatively assess both kinds of intelligence in terms of its value and whether the administration was capable of providing the kinds of intelligence officers would need and find valuable or whether patrol officers are in a better position to make that determination. Sixty-six percent of officers said that while the administration's capability varied, patrol officers were better suited to determine what intelligence would be valuable. In their assessments, officers expressed many of the same sentiments and ideas they did when discussing the specific forms of intelligence earlier in the study. The sources of departmental intelligence were also viewed as out-of-touch with officers. Officers considered that the department's historical intelligence had less value than real-time intelligence, that the majority of intelligence is generated by officers which is then just passed up to the administration and recycled by the department, and that officer intelligence was more up-to-date, specific, and actionable while departmental intelligence was out of date and too general. For example, Officer 26 said "Officers, definitely, just for the fact that the lieutenants who aren't on the street all the time are going to read it in an email or report compared to the officer getting it live, real world, right there, their observing, understanding. I would say hands down it's the officers." Officer 36 saw that officers and administration experience the job differently, "I don't think they're less capable, I think they're competent persons, they're just in a different environment. Like I said, I think they're kinda numbers based and that's the world they live in. Where on the street, we're in a different world. So I think it's just based off that perspective. If they were out here more, and I'm not saying that they need to be, but I think they would see the difference."

Twenty-five percent of officers did not indicate that patrol officers had the advantage in this knowledge but rather said that each source provides important and distinct intelligence that ideally should work together. These officers indicated that the administration provided intelligence relating to trends and criminal histories that officers would find valuable but that would also be difficult for officers to compile and update. The administration also provided direction that allowed for coordinated officer, beat, district, and department activities that officers would find valuable and could utilize. For example, Officer 18 said, "I'd say the Compstat itself pushes you toward patrolling your areas, where from other officers, it gives you a better understanding of what you're getting into at that area. Yeah, it's almost like comparing apples to oranges on that one, I guess to me. And if they do have similarities, information wise, one of them is more location and a numbers game, increasing or decreasing, where with other officers it's informational based on what to expect."

Finally, the remaining officers indicated they felt that either the department was in a better position to determine what officers need and value or that the question could not be generalized and that it depended on the individual officer or administrative member as to how capable they were in determining intelligence needs and value.

### **Perception of the Administration's Ability to Assess Officers' Intelligence Needs**

In officers' use of intelligence, departmental intelligence wasn't held in very high regard. With officers finding limited utility and value in departmental intelligence, and often associating the administration with the poor quality of departmental intelligence, it is important to examine the source of the intelligence in more depth. Officers were asked whether they felt the administration was in touch with what officers are experiencing on the street and whether they understood what kind of intelligence officers would find useful to them on the street. If the

administration lacked this understanding, they might disseminate intelligence and directives that officers would be unwilling to use or follow because the officers perceived the intelligence source as flawed.

Many officers said the administration (everyone with the rank of lieutenant or above) was lacking in this regard, either because they were too far removed from, or only had a general understanding of, the patrol officer reality. However, support for the administration was also found. Twenty-two percent of officers felt that the administration did a good job of understanding the experiences and intelligence needs of officers. For example, one officer said, "I can only speak for my lieutenant, I think he does an excellent job of understanding patrol and what we need. If there's ever a situation where I think we need more resources or intelligence on a particular person or place, he's very good about getting that communicated out to the rest of the beat. He expects us, actually, to let the other people on our beat know what's going on. He wants us to send emails -District 2, everyone. So whether it's just a Beat 23 issue or a Beat 22 issue or a Beat 21 issue, everybody should know about it within the district." Officer 39 also offered a positive view of his lieutenant, "I think they are quite capable, I know our lieutenants go through reports, help identify problem areas, they've also started working the streets so they're familiar with some of the people we're dealing with, some of the issues we're dealing with, and my lieutenant, Lieutenant X, has actually sent out quite a few emails passing along information when he notices things in different reports saying 'Hey be on the lookout for this, I noticed there's a trend here with a few different calls', so I think they're quite capable."

Although some officers held a positive view of the administration in this regard, 17% of officers said that the administration, while having a general understanding of what officers do, need, and find valuable, had a limited direct involvement with the beat that left them with a

limited understanding of how to solve problems and manage the beat, Similar to Sun's. For example, Officer 37 said,

I think they all have it [an understanding of what officers do, need and find valuable]. Whether they take the time to do it is the question. I think a lot of our backlash with our department is someone trying to tell me how to do my job when they haven't done my job in a very long time. Like I said I worked here for X years and Fargo has changed in the years that I've worked here so you can't tell me your patrol, when you did patrol, is the same as how I do patrol or how it works here anymore. And so I think the reality of what they're asking us to do on some stuff is unrealistic. But I think they could benefit a lot by asking us what's practical and what's appropriate to combat stuff and I don't think that happens.

Officer 54 said that while the administration could use improvement in providing an appropriate amount of good intelligence, they were more out of touch with the officers' experiences on the beat,

Just dealing with intelligence, I think they do. I think predominantly they have an understanding of what could be useful to us but I think they do--there isn't a good mechanism for filtering good stuff from the stuff that isn't very important, it doesn't seem like there's much of a filter. All of the information comes down to us, emails, our bulletin board...yeah, I don't have a big problem with them understanding it, what goes on from an intelligence standpoint. My issue with them is more of them understanding what we do from day to day, how we are tasked. With the intelligence stuff though I don't really have an issue. Just too much of it.

Thirty-one percent of officers said the administration was too far removed from the street to have a real understanding of what officers needed and would find valuable. For example, Officer 32 said, "Well they're out of touch because they're not out on the street. Now, they're more likely to accept that fact and they've made some changes that have made it much better like the intelligence team, the street crime unit, some things like that. They've actually accepted the fact they're out of touch and placed a system that can move the information around. Which, ya know, I have no problem with that. If they know there's a problem and they don't know how to deal with it, having a system in place to deal with it is a good choice, delegate it."



Twenty percent of officers, many who stated the administration was too far removed from the street, see the administration focused too much on statistics and numbers and some feel that the lieutenants in particular rely too much on the sergeants for an understanding of what's going on and what's needed in their district. One officer noted how the administration's lack of actual beat knowledge forces them to rely on statistics and reports, while officers rely on real world experience, "Compstat is a huge waste of manpower and time. The reason why I say this, I know what goes on on my beat, I don't need a computer screen to tell me what going on on my beat. Compstat is derived for administrators to know what going on in their city because they're not on the street. They don't know what's going on. They don't take calls for service, they don't know where the sex offenders live at, they don't know where the traffic problems are unless it's on a piece of paper somebody printed off and put in front of them and even then, they don't understand it."

A few officers attributed that sense of being out of touch to administrative personnel ceasing to be "real cops" once promoted to lieutenant or higher. For example, one officer said, "I would say the higher in rank you get, the less of a cop you become and the more of a manager you become. And the further up you get the less "cop-ish" you get...I think once you get to be--if you're a lieutenant on patrol, that's probably the last guy to be competent. If you're an administrative lieutenant I think you're already starting to lose it a little bit. I mean not to say that they couldn't gain it back if they spent time on the street again but as far as being competent at law enforcement, ya gotta do it, and keep doing it, and if you've been a way for a while there's a transition time to come back."

Experiencing the separation from, and losing the sense of what it was to be, a patrol officer was something this officer also mentioned,

I can't speak for other places but here I think things get lost once your away from patrol for a couple years. Where since I've started, I've been working here a short time, things have changed so much in that X years. Where if you got someone who hasn't worked the streets in 10 years and is a lieutenant now, it seems odd to me they don't ask the subject matter experts. Recently they have asked officers things but if there a problem with the beat, why aren't you asking the officers, why is the lieutenant doing these ops plans? And maybe he is but I'm not seeing that. They're not working these beats every day, they haven't worked it recently, they don't know what's going on...

Part of that disconnect may be unavoidable as the officers and the administration work in two different worlds, each with their own specific and varied concerns and focuses. Officer 69 said "I think there's kind of a large disconnect between us and our lieutenants and above. You know they have other stuff they have to worry about, a lot of politics, the bigger picture, bigger picture things than I deal with but it still seems they either don't understand or they ignore us when we say, 'Hey we need more officers to deal with this stuff on the street, we need more resources available' and it seems like 'Yeah we'll try and get you some stuff' and then nothing ever really pans out."

It also appeared there were improvements in this aspect. Fifteen percent of officers stated that the administration in general was getting better in this understanding of what officers do, need, and find valuable. A substantial number of officers (34%) saw improvements in this understanding stemming from getting lieutenants out on the street. The department was taking steps to get lieutenants to take a shift once a month so as to increase familiarization with their officers and with their district, its calls, and its problems.

Officers felt that by having lieutenants spend more time on the streets this would translate to a better understanding of what officers dealt with on a daily basis and in understanding the conditions of the beats. Officer 58 said,

I think they're getting a better idea now that they are having lieutenants work different shifts. They never used to work evenings and nights, they used to come in on a regular day shift and go home at 4 or 5, Now that they actually have to work a shift, I don't know

how often it is but it's been very helpful 'cause it lets them see exactly what the load is like on the different shifts especially on evenings and the nights and what's going on. And I think it helps them realize they are able to interact with people they normally wouldn't and probably haven't in a while. We definitely have more knowledge as patrol officers as far as intel goes because we deal with it, that's all we do. They deal with policies and procedures and internal investigations, media and other things they have going so I think them getting out and actually on a shift, rather than just in the office, I think that it's helped a lot 'cause then they get to know the people we're dealing with and things like that.

Officers noted that since this has been occurring, lieutenants have mentioned they were surprised at just how busy officers were. For example, this officer said,

I think it's better being how the lieutenants are back on the streets but they have a long ways to go. We've actually had a couple of instances where lieutenants are like 'Oh my God, you guys are that busy, this is crazy, you guys don't get lunch, we need to do something about it', for them to be a lieutenant and have that "come to Jesus" realization that 'my God you guys actually do work' is kind of a shame. They should be out there taking calls with you, showing up on calls, that's how they earn their respect, that's how they become better leaders and I think that's how they would make a better ops plan, not by sitting at their desk staring at some numbers, they need to get out on the street, get in the heart of your area, I think.

However, some officers (14%) noted this benefit may be dependent on the lieutenants' patrol experience and the amount of time they've already spent off the streets. For example, Officer 22 said, "Right now they are on a schedule where every week we can have a lieutenant come to nights and do, cover kind of a combination of evenings and nights. So I think they are getting a better—refreshed. For some of them it's been a while since they've had to be on the street. And then we got a couple lieutenants who basically rose up the ranks fairly quickly so they haven't been so out of touch with patrol, they still have a pretty good understanding."

In summary, the majority of officers felt the administration was to some degree out of touch with what intelligence officers would find valuable and what officers are experiencing on patrol. The administration, more specifically lieutenants, were out of touch because they no longer experience, and thus do not understand, what officers are experiencing, nor what kind of

intelligence they would find useful. Many officers believed this was improving through the Chief's drive to get lieutenants out from behind a desk and out on the street.

Officers indicated they trust in their own knowledge and experience as well as that of other officers. Though even with other officers, the utility and value of the intelligence is dependent on the source. The source is even more important in regard to departmental intelligence. Because officers see the administration as not knowing what officers know or experiencing what they experience, officers perceive the administration, as the departmental intelligence source, as uninformed. When they view the source as flawed, this may reinforce officers' perception that departmental intelligence is limited in its utility and value, which generates a negative view of departmental intelligence in general. With most officers having, or striving for, extensive beat knowledge, officers say departmental intelligence has little to offer them. They are already aware of the hotspots, high accident areas, developing crime trends, and areas in need of extra patrol because they take the calls, perform the investigations, and do the patrols in those areas already. Directives from the department are often viewed as either redundant, because officers are already aware of the need for a specialized focus, or as unrealistic, because they do not consider the realities of the patrol officer. For officers to see value in intelligence it must have an immediate need or important purpose in their day to day operations.

The department may have difficulty meeting the standard of good intelligence set by patrol officers. As officers noted, the patrol officers and the administration function in two different worlds. The bureaucratic function of the administration necessitates compiling historical data and providing dynamic, in the moment, intelligence that officers desire may, in some ways, be beyond its capabilities. However, a format like the ILP, if presented properly and

maintained, can provide officers with intelligence that they can put to immediate use because it calls for officer to take action to accomplish a goal, or it allows them to further an investigation or intelligence gathering process.

### **Departmental Communication**

The current study has already identified the importance that officers put on communication in managing their area of responsibility, and the limited use and value they find in departmental intelligence. Officers found fault in the presentation of intelligence and the administration's understanding of what officers find valuable in intelligence and their experience on the street. The examination of how officers use intelligence turns to whether communication problems contribute to officers' perception of, and limited utilization of, departmental intelligence. The ability to coordinate on intelligence, as well on concerns, problems, and ideas between the administration and patrol officers may be partly dependent on the level of good communication between patrol officers and the rest of the chain of command.

Fifty-two officers provided an overall assessment of communication in the department. Given the opportunity to discuss the condition of communication within the department, movement up and down the chain of command, as well as the quality of communication, responses varied widely with both positive and negative views. While a few officers gave communication a more direct assessment of either being good (15%) or poor (29%), the other 64% of officers described communication as getting better, with officers typically noting that in the past communication problems were more frequent. Criticisms of communication within the department mainly centered on two areas; problems in accessing sergeants and lieutenants, who are entry points into the chain of command, and problems with the flow of information within the chain of command structure.

## Communication Access Points

Regarding communications at the different points in the chain of command, officers who spoke of communications between officers noted that communication between the shifts was good and 24 % of all officers mentioned communication with sergeants to be good as well. Officers said that sergeants, because they were more active on the streets, interacted with officers, and showed up on calls, were more on the same level as patrol officers. While officers said that sergeants were still part of patrol, lieutenants were considered administration and officers felt a certain disconnect with them that could inhibit communication. Officer 72 explained,

Well it's kinda divided. Sergeants and patrol I lump in the same group. Anything above that, lieutenant or higher, it's getting better but it's still pretty poor, they don't really communicate with patrol or supervisors with what's going on. The chief will send an email once a week about what he does but I have no idea what my lieutenant does, I really have no idea. I think the communication between our supervisors, like the night shift sergeants, like our actual supervisors is really good, I can go to those guys for anything. If it's something that they can't help me with I know they'll communicate it up the chain and help try to get it going, doesn't mean it's gonna go anywhere, but he does communicate it.

A few officers (10%) noted however that communications could use some improvements at the officer to sergeant level. Officers have two sergeants, a shift sergeant, which supervises the shift they are on, and a beat sergeant that supervises their assigned beat. These communication issues stem mostly from the limited contact that some officers had with their beat sergeant when they each worked different shifts. Officers on these different shifts were only infrequently able to speak with them about issues in a face-to-face manner and typically had to rely on the email system.

The more notable communication problem with access points in the chain of command was from officers to lieutenants. While officers noted that the chain of command from officer to

sergeant to lieutenant was important and typically followed, officers did have the opportunity to communicate more directly with lieutenants as well as relying on sergeants to forward their communication up to the lieutenants. Twenty-three percent of officers expressed a negative view of communication at the lieutenant level. Officers noted that lieutenants work the day shift, may come in late and leave early, and with their focus on administrative duties, typically were not available to many officers. Officers said when there was breakdown in communication it typically happened at the lieutenant level either with the lieutenants' incoming communication from sergeants or the lieutenants' outgoing communication to deputy chiefs. In following the chain of command, communication was accomplished indirectly, although not always effectively. For example, Officer 57 said,

Well I think it's pretty good between officer and sergeants for the most part. Once you get above that, I can't really speak for sergeants to lieutenants and DC but I think there could be more communication between lieutenants and officers. I think it could be more personable, and maybe more of it. It's kinda like the sergeants are the go-through, it's the whole chain of command thing where if I wanna go up I should really go thru my sergeant and from there he takes care of it, going on up the chain. Going down if my lieutenant wants to come and talk to me, he's gonna do that, he obviously doesn't have to go through my sergeant... I think there could be a little more dialogue between the lieutenants and the officers.

Another officer also indicated that sergeants try to act as a go-between for officers and lieutenants but communication still suffers because lieutenants are not spending time on the streets,

I feel like I have the right to say everything I say, and I don't feel I can't say the things I need to say. Whether anything comes of it is the question. Like yesterday I had a meeting and we talked about a lot of things but realistically do I think anything is going to happen from that? No, I don't. But I think there's that disconnect of them not understanding what we do and if they actually do a lot of what we do—I think our sergeants try to portray a lot of what we do to them but they just don't get it, they don't understand it. A lot of those things, unless somebody's hands on with it, they don't get it.

In contrast, a few officers indicated that communication with lieutenants was good (12%) or that it had been improving (10%), finding them open to ideas and willing to communicate with them. For example, one officer said,

I think it's very smooth, I've had no issues with how communication happens...the lieutenant, I'll usually see him coming in and out of the locker room on a frequent basis coming to work so if there anything I need to talk to him about—I have no issues. When he works the night shift, he'll actually come out and make it a point to sit and talk with each one of us, even if it's just 10 minutes of BS'ing, to me it's very much appreciated. It shows you're not afraid to get out from behind the desk. You can talk to each and every one of your subordinates and know them a little bit, know how they work, just find out their opinions on things, so it's been very good.

The officers' perception of a disconnect with the administration related to intelligence needs and dissemination, noted earlier, was also found regarding departmental communication. A lack of access to communication points in the chain of command supported the perception of officers (12%) that the administration was out of touch with officers. Officer 17 said, "I believe that those within a shift communicate very well, the officers that work together, communication going up and down tends to lack drastically, very much. You kinda heard my comments in the meeting earlier about the fact that we don't see some of these—we see our sergeants and that's it, we don't see any lieutenants, we don't see the people passing down these directives and they don't see us. They don't see what we do every day, they look at numbers, they look at the calls, they don't live it."

In contrast to the problems accessing the administration at the bottom level, a similar number of officers (20%) saw access at the top level of the administration as improved and expressed an appreciation for the efforts the new administration with Interim Chief Todd has made to communicate with officers. The chief of the previous administration reportedly expressed negative views about patrol and patrol officers with a few officers stating they were apprehensive about communicating with the old chief because the relationship between officers



and the chief had deteriorated significantly. However, many officers noted there has been improvement, especially since the interim chief has been in place. The interim chief was a former Field Services Deputy Chief and had moved up from within the patrol ranks. Interim Chief Todd had expressed the desire for more open communications and attempted to open lines of communication between the administration and officers, sending emails updating officers on developments within the department. He also implemented “walking tours” with shifts, where he met with officers during briefing and discussed their concerns, problems, and ideas and was also partially responsible for the push to get lieutenants out on the street and work closer with the patrol officers. A few officers noted that the new administration appeared interested in wanting feedback from officers as well as being clearer in their expectations of officers, in contrast to the last administration. For example, Officer 18 said, “The thing I noticed that’s really nice, the Chief sends out an email saying this is what happened this week, we got this, this week, we implemented this, this week, we’ve got a (inaudible), you know, stuff like that... It’s nice to see that he’s doing kind of a trickle-down effect where we see what’s actually happening as they do it all during the day, many of the day patrol officers don’t know what’s going on either, so it’s nice to know, this is the direction we’re heading, stuff like that.” Another officer also noted how the new chief was attempting to make the department more cohesive, “The chief comes down, does his listening tours, which is good, and he sends out his weekly email which is really good too, a lot of people really like that and it keeps everyone in tune with what’s going on in the department so it’s kinda nice to have that, it makes it more you and I in the department. When Ternes [the former chief] was here you never heard from him, you never saw him.”

## Chain of Command Structure

Officers also indicated that communication through the chain of command could be problematic. Officers felt that while problems and directives came down the chain to them and they offered solutions up the chain, their communication up the chain was filtered, distorted, hindered, or stopped altogether. This perception resulted in 10% of the officers stating that communication in the chain of command was really a “one-way street”—communication goes down to officers but officer communication up the chain is inconsequential. Ten percent of officers also felt, however, that officers don’t always communicate up the chain very well. Frustration with the impression that nothing comes from their communication inhibits them from pursuing communication up the chain.

A few officers (10%) expressed the view that the administration does not have an open-door policy and does not want officer feedback. This officer considered that communication was one-directional with little desire for officer input, “It’s a one way, it comes down and they’ll give you this facade that they’re seeking input, it’s like with these hours today [a discussion in briefing regarding officer flex time], oh they want your input on this but in reality, they’re gonna make up their mind about what they want and don’t care what your opinion is. It’s really a one way. It’ll come down and the sergeants will ask, and the sergeants will gather that data that the lieutenant asked for but the lieutenant is gonna go ‘I really don’t give a shit what they want, this is what I’m gonna do cause I’m the lieutenant and I get to do this’.” Another officer also felt that patrol officers were disregarded saying,

So not everything goes up and down the chain the same. Now with the military when information goes up it doesn’t necessarily have to reach the commander but here if you submit information and need it to go up there’s either a lag in response or no response at all. So one of the things I struggle with is now if I have a question for a sergeant or lieutenant that needs answering, like some of the new DUI laws and how we’re gonna handle those things. When I would submit an inquiry like that I got a 50/50 chance of

getting a response so now the question I ask, where's the accountability? If a sergeant or lieutenant sends an inquiry to me I submit that in a reasonable time but where's the responsibility to me if I submit a question? And I can't go up to the lieutenant and say, 'Hey I submitted an inquiry and you never responded back', I don't have that authority. So sometimes it works, more often times it doesn't work the way it's intended.

However, as with the other aspects of communication, there were opposing views. Thirteen percent of offices stated that the administration had an open-door policy and does want feedback from officers.

Another aspect of communication within the chain of command was the perception by officers that the bureaucracy of the chain of command can inhibit quality communication and the assessment of new ideas and proposals was slow and needed momentum from sergeants and lieutenants. For example, one officer said, "It's definitely one-way [communication]...it just gets so lost in-between, the communication is really poor. And I don't know if that's all big departments, whether it be in law enforcement or Microsoft, but its poor communication. There's not an open line of communication, I think it's complete bullshit to be honest with you, this whole line of communication that if I want to, if I have a grievance or idea, whatever, I need to talk to my sergeant, he needs to talk to my lieutenant and my lieutenant needs to talk to my deputy, then the deputy chief needs to talk to the chief and it's such a joke." Officer 20 said, "Obviously they have to pick and choose as to what they think would work too. Sometimes we've had things brought up that get shot down but if enough of us start bringing up that we should have this, or we should be able to do this, and it kinda gets the ball rolling a little more. It's not that just automatically somebody comes up with an idea that we can do or use, we'll do it right away. Sometimes it takes a little bit of momentum first."

Other more individualized complaints about the quality of communication included confusion who intelligence would be provided to, information was diffused or lost, the

department issued broad, unfocused, or vague expectations for officers, too much reliance on email, provided poor feedback regarding officers' improvements and questions, or provided too much, or poorly presented, information. Perceptions of intelligence and communication may be interconnected as many of the criticisms of communication were mirrored in their criticism of intelligence.

This breakdown in communication is a source of frustration for officers as it can make officers feel like they are out of the loop, from what is occurring in the department to what is occurring during incidents. This officer said,

I have good communications with my sergeants, the four who work my shift...but like my lieutenant, I don't feel I have great communication with him. I don't know what he does, he doesn't know what I do. My direct lieutenant, same thing, deputy chief, same thing. They know who I am, I know who they are but are they talking to me on a regular basis, do they know what I do, do I know what they do? No, except for the Chief. So I think there is that breakdown in communication between what they know and us...like this [name of suspect] one, where he killed two people downtown. That was the biggest complaint amongst everybody, that there was no communication. Officers were showing up for work and being told to sit on perimeters. 'Why I am I sitting on this perimeter?' 'I don't know but they told me to tell you to sit here, so now you gotta sit here'. Well why am I sitting here? Nobody knew? That's not good.

**Officer assessment of departmental communication by type of officer.** Officers held both positive and negative views of departmental communication as well as many officers feeling that the department was improving in their communication with officers. These views were examined in the context of different officer descriptive categories. Officers' responses regarding communication were grouped into *positive*, *negative*, and *improving* categories based on their assessments of communication and they frequency of their comments regarding its positive, negative, or improving aspects (Figure 9). Overall, officers in the different categories made more negative than positive references to communication, and approximately the same number of positive and improving responses. There was some variation by experience, district

and shift. In the experience category, novice officers expressed slightly more positive views than negative views in comparison to the typically greater number of negative views over positive ones found in the other experience levels as well as the other categories. Additionally, novice officers expressed two to three times more positive views compared to the positive views of other levels of experience. When the districts were examined, the main variation was with District 3, which had roughly less than half the positive communication views than other districts. There was also variation in communication views across shifts. The day shift expressed the greatest number of negative comments among the shifts, three times as many as the night shift, and more than any other category level, but also more comments than other shifts and categories regarding the improvement made in communication.

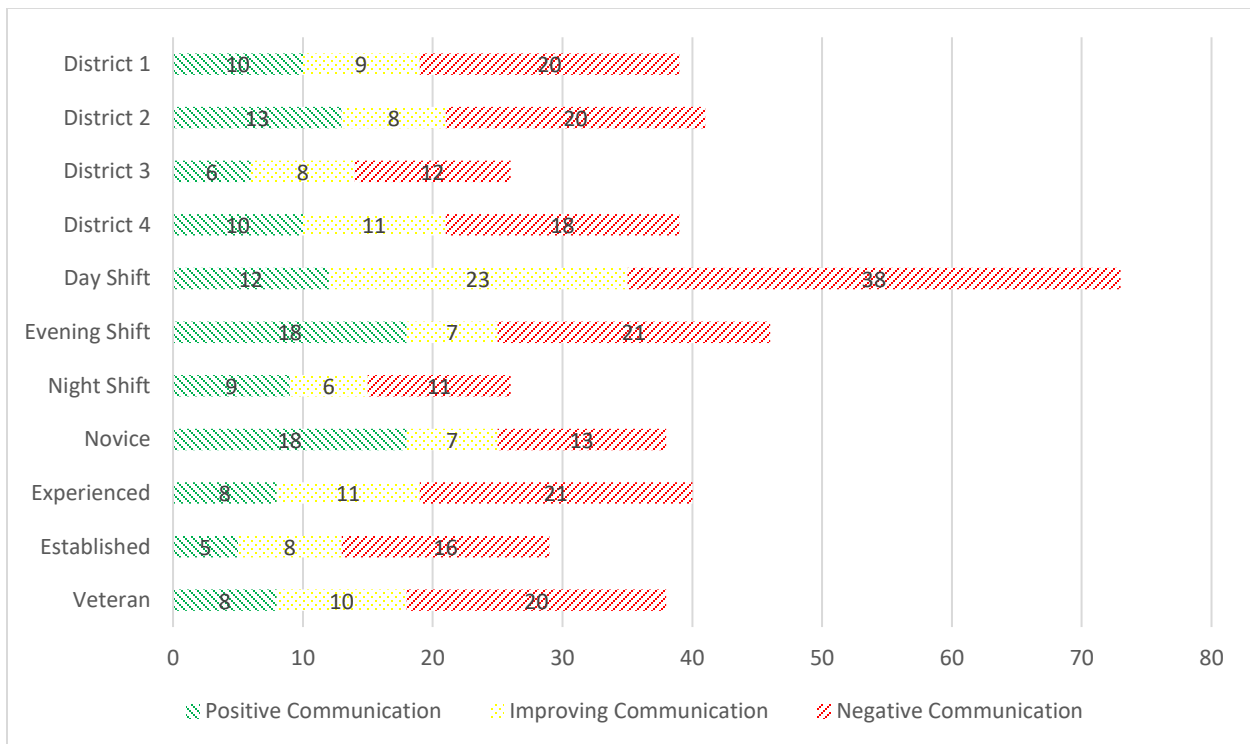


Figure 9. Frequency of communication perceptions within the department by district, shift and experience

In summary, the majority of officers (64%) characterized communication within the department as improving. Officers particularly noted how the new Chief has made obvious attempts at improving communication within the department. However, there were conflicting viewpoints on the means and quality of communication within the department. While some officers saw flaws in the ability to access lieutenants and sergeants and the administration's unwillingness to seek officer feedback, other officers saw just the opposite.

The chain of command structure was also seen as a source of communication problems in the way it inhibited or distorted communication. Similar communication problems may be commonplace in bureaucratic, hierarchal organizations with multiple levels of management, such as healthcare organizations, which may contribute to "organizational silence" where workers are reticent about communication with superiors because of a negative perception of management and the feeling that their input is not valued (Garon, 2012). However, because the police department is organized around a para-military structure the chain of command is a necessary component to this organizational structure despite some limitations in open access and quick, clear communication. This structure contributes to communication problems in police departments (Guyot, 1979) however while officers indicated the weak point in this chain was the transition from worker to management at the lieutenant level, officers recognized that additional improvement was needed or that it was taking place.

## **DISCUSSION**

The purpose of the current study was to gain an understanding of how patrol officers manage their area of responsibility by examining their underlying perceptions and attitudes about patrol, their behavior and activities while on patrol, and the factors that influence their behavior. It also aimed to understand how officers perceived and utilized different forms of intelligence. Through this investigation, I not only gained a better understanding of these processes but also discovered and gained insight into some of the underlying mechanisms that formed those processes. Also discovered were the mechanisms that work against effective and efficient beat management and negatively influenced officers' perception of intelligence.

### **Officers' View of Patrol**

#### **Importance of Patrol**

One important component in understanding how officers manage their area of responsibility is understanding the importance they place on the patrol function. However, as Brooks, Piquero, and Cronin (1993) note, very little is known about police officer attitudes and what influences them. Studies of patrol officers typically focus on attitudes toward, the public, supervisors, workgroup, or their policing role or style but there is a gap in the knowledge about how officers view the act of patrol. This understanding is just one component in the breadth of knowledge that officers can offer the field of policing (Bayley and Bittner, 1981). Recognizing the importance officers place on patrolling helps provide a clearer picture of what officers do and why.

The vast majority of officers did not consider patrol as a time-filler in between answering calls and most officers considered the patrol function as important, if not more important in some cases, as answering calls for service. Officers believed the patrol function served important

criminal justice and policing themes; community visibility, crime prevention, and deterrence and their belief in those purposes guided their behavior in an effort to serve those purposes by using community interaction, and proactive and problem-focused policing. Patrol work provides an opportunity for officers to serve those purposes through different means as well as address officers' own desires in police work. The vast majority of officers also enjoyed the act of patrolling; it gave them an opportunity to enjoy freedom of movement, autonomy in decision making, a variety of work experiences, and the ability to be proactive in their policing. Officers can, to a limited degree, pursue their own important goals and preferences; focus on particular offenses, bettering themselves as an officer, and providing a positive presence for the community. These must be accomplished within the context of also accomplishing departmental mandated priorities, answering calls for service, and performing traffic enforcement.

The understanding of how officers perceive and envision the patrol function helps relieve the knowledge gap described by Wain and Ariel, (2014) providing that introspective examination of patrol from officers that has been missing. This understanding of patrol and the importance that officers place on it can be crucial when departments consider changes to the form, function, and duties of patrolling. Departments can make better informed decisions and officers may be more accepting of change if they feel that the department administration understands their perspective and priorities.

### **Obstacles to Patrol**

The importance that officers place on the patrol function is evident in the level of frustration they experience in dealing with issues or activities they perceive interrupts or takes away from their patrolling, particularly the inter-related issues of high call volume and short staffing, handling nuisance calls, and unrealistic directives. There is a knowledge gap in



literature in the examination of what patrol officers consider as impediments or obstacles to patrol. While officers have described negative aspects of police work, the obstacles identified by officers has been limited, for example, procedural guidelines (Paoline III, 2004). The current study seeks to add to the depth of understanding of what officers consider obstacles to patrol work.

Officers partially attributed heavy call volume to increases in the population of the study site and an increase in disruptive and criminal activity, however, the ability to service the call volume was also seen as function of staffing by the department. Even to the extent that officers complained about nuisance calls, the discontent felt was partially attributable to the public itself but also to the lack of staffing that inhibits officers' patrolling while being forced to deal with nuisance calls. Officers recognized the need to serve the public and were aware that the public might not always used their services appropriately but there was a perception that some calls for service took away from their important patrol work. In both call volume and staffing, and with nuisance calls, officers felt that the department could alleviate both issues to some degree by changes in the utilization of CSO's, dispatch policy and additional staff that would allow for more patrolling to occur while still serving the needs of the public. These results provide a unique officer-derived perspective on the purpose and value of patrolling. It confirms and highlight that officers value patrol time, see it as necessary and important, as well as exemplify officers' awareness that both the public and department can negatively affect the degree that they can patrol. These qualitative findings also suggest that there may be a stronger association between attitudes and behavior than suggested by quantitative studies of police work (Engel and Worden, 2003).

## **Beat and Shift Characteristics**

Beat and shift characteristics influence beat management because they dictate to a large degree what kinds of activities officers will engage in and when in the shift they will engage in them. As noted both in the literature review, with studies from Cordner (1979), Whitaker (1981), Frank et al (1997), Famega (2003, 2005), and in officers' statements, available time to patrol varied widely based on calls for service volume within the context of their beat and shift characteristics. While Mastrofski, Parks, Reiss, Jr., Worden, DeJong, Snipes, and Terrill (1998) recognized there may be variations in activities between beats or shifts, the current study examines these variances to a greater degree.

The examination of the sometimes-contrasting departmental expectations and officers' attempts at serving the purposes of patrol, preferences, and goals revealed that shift and beat particulars could make accomplishing some departmental expectations, like traffic enforcement, more difficult compared to another shift and beat while some beats and shifts provide more opportunities for officers to accomplish their own goals and exercise their policing duty preferences. These different shifts and beats also contain individualized problems and focuses for officers to address, which serves as input in how they ultimately manage that area of responsibility. Some beats, because of geographic construction and development, and some shifts, because of temporal related activities, were more conducive to positive public contact, traffic enforcement, and crime prevention opportunities. Officers recognized these opportunities, or lack thereof, and took advantage of those opportunities, or tried to capitalize on them when they were available. Beats and shifts were also associated the officers self-reported geographic beat coverage, characterization of calls for service, level of patrol in certain areas, their ability

and time available to engage in patrol, and their desire for extra patrol be provided on their beat and shift.

The differences inherent in shift and beat makes generalizing about patrol officer behavior and activities difficult. The behavior and activities that officers engage in are developed from a combination of officers' desires in patrol work, and departmental directives and expectations, that are placed within the context of opportunities and limitations that beat and shift characteristics present. Policing literature has focused on particular tasks officers engage in and the time expended for these tasks in an effort to determine how officers spend their time and conduct themselves on patrol (Webster, 1970; Cordner, 1979; Whitaker, 1981; Frank, et al, 1997; Famega, 2003, 2005). However, for a more nuanced understanding of patrol officer behavior, it is important to remember and consider that officer activities must be examined in the context of their patrol assignment, as the activities and focuses could vary widely depending on the shift and beat, and their characteristics. By understanding the variances generated from beat and shift, not only is a deeper understanding of officer behavior obtained, but more informed decisions concerning patrol function and duties can be derived from evaluation and research that addresses these variations.

### **Association of Patrol Assignment and Officer Experience and Views**

The activities that officers are able to engage in are in part dependent on the opportunities and limitations on the beat and shift. However, there also exists an interaction between officer experience and beat/shift activities. Officers with different levels of experience may have different views, perceptions, and focuses on patrol and managing their area of responsibility, which may influence, and be influenced by, their patrol assignment.

Officers in the study said that community visibility and positive interaction are important. While it is known that some beats and shifts are not conducive to establishing or engaging in this activity, some officers may have more opportunities for visibility and positive interaction. Because of the line bidding system, where beat and shifts are chosen by officers but assigned by seniority, more experienced officers have greater ability to choose their “line” and thus their work environment and its particular conditions. While more experienced officers saw the purposes of patrol as community visibility and deterrence, less experienced officers, also had a greater focus on crime prevention in a more legalistic style (Wilson, 1968). But these associations may partially be a function of patrol assignment. Officers with greater experience tended to choose quieter, day shift, beats and these were conducive to focuses on the community, positive interaction, and service. However, officers with lesser experience did not have those opportunities to the same degree and more typically had assignment in the busier, call-driven evening shifts or to night shifts, which transition from call-driven to a lack of opportunity for extensive community contact. So, these officers’ views of the purposes and means of patrol as crime prevention or community focused may partially be a function of how call driven the shifts are and the degree of residential access on the beat and shift, as compared to a stand-alone belief held by the officer. This is important to recognize as officer attitude and behavior may be partially formed by the work environment, with some beats and shifts contributing to, or impeding, officers’ ability and willingness to interact with the community. With this understanding police departments may be able to more effectively address officer behavior and their assessment of it, as well as community attitudes and reactions to contact with police officers.

## **The Beat Management Philosophy**

In asking patrol officers whether they held any particular philosophy regarding how patrol should be conducted or their beat managed, most officers expressed general ideas about conducting patrol but nothing really akin to a philosophy. However, a beat management philosophy became evident in the exploration and discussion of the beat integrity concept and in the practice of jumping calls. A review of the literature did not reference this term in the context of a beat management philosophy. However, some components of the concept have been discussed in the literature. Mazerolle, Adams, Budz, Cockerill, and Vance (2003) mentioned the concept of beat ownership as a component of beat policing and Paoline III, Myers, and Worden, (2000) stated that beat knowledge, generated from stable beat assignments, was a component of community oriented policing. In a similar vein, researchers have examined the use and adherence to informal work rules (Ricksheim and Chermak, 1993; Paulson, 2004; Cope, 2004; Stroschine, Alpert, and Dunham, 2008; Worrall, 2013), unwritten expectations of officer workplace behaviors dictated by the behaviors and expectations of co-workers as well as workplace conditions. Beat integrity incorporates some of these components into an articulable philosophy that guides officer attitude and behavior. It also provides an understanding of what officers value in their own, and other officers, work performance and provides a guide for further research in analyzing the way officers manage their beat.

The definition and adherence to the concept of beat integrity forms a set of personal and inter-officer informal work rules that dictate how beats should be managed and how officers should behave. Beat integrity, and the inter-related practice of jumping calls, sets out the desirable qualities of officers and beat management in that officers are responsible for their beat, have good beat knowledge, incorporate a good work ethic by handling their calls independently,

and willing to function as a team player in the process of managing their beat. While informal work rules are meant to guide behaviors, especially in situations without official mandates or direction, officers in the study indicated that adherence and acceptance of beat integrity were not universal. However, officers who failed to abide by the beat management philosophy were perceived negatively.

When asked specifically, most officers had no articulable beat management philosophy. However, the results of the current study indicate that officers do in fact operate under a beat management philosophy in the form of informal work rules. These results revealed beat integrity, as a beat management philosophy, a concept which was derived from officers' behavior and statements, may be a unique discovery in policing literature. It is possible that, given the description and utility of the components, that officers in other police departments may use a similar beat management philosophy that takes the form of informal work rules, and may not be recognizable to officers, police departments, or researchers as a specific beat management philosophy.

### **Assigned Beats and Community Oriented Policing**

Officers stated that one feature that facilitated good beat knowledge was having assigned beats. Both beat knowledge and assigned beats are integral to the community oriented policing concept (Kane, 2000). Officers in the current study saw this knowledge, generated from assigned beats, as providing information about "problem people", hotspots, potential problem areas, and the location of positive community interaction opportunities.

With beat knowledge comes a greater ability to address and resolve problems and situations on the beat. I observed many instances where officers used their intimate knowledge of the beat to seek out and address problems. A public component was also visible; many officers

were known to citizens and local business employees and had positive interactions with them. With that positive interaction comes cooperation, information sharing, and a greater sense of community between officers and the public (Weitzer and Tuch, 2004). Officers recognized this relationship between the public and themselves would not have developed in the same manner without assigned beats. Some officers even mentioned that before assigned beats, they were less invested in their beats as they lacked a sense of ownership.

An assigned beat is a core component within the community oriented policing concept. Ideally, assigned beats will build knowledge of the beat and its citizens, as well as familiarity, empathy, trust, and cooperation with the public (Cordner, 1979). The results of the current study suggest that assigned beats were accomplishing goals of community oriented policing, both in its ability to increase beat knowledge and in its ability to increase and enhance community interaction.

### **The Nature of Officers**

In the current study, officers' perspectives on patrol work as well as different aspects of patrol work itself have been discussed in relation to officers managing their area of responsibility. The nature of patrol officers themselves contributes to the way these areas are managed. The patrol officer qualities and characteristics referenced by officers or observed during data collection structure how officers manage their beat by contributing to the motivation and reasoning behind their patrol activities.

### **Good Officer Qualities**

Officers were provided with a unique opportunity to discuss the qualities that make a good patrol officer. Their responses point to an ideal officer orientation that combines aspects of utilizing informal work rules to be effective (Stroshine, et al, 2008) and holding a service

orientation (Wilson, 1968). This combination of traditionally police-oriented skills (beat knowledge, being a team player, self-motivation, and observation skills) and people skills (communication skills, public interaction, fairness and consistency, and understanding and compassion) holds importance in community oriented policing and in police legitimacy. They address being an effective and efficient officer and engaging in effective and efficient beat management as well as addressing important policing concepts.

Effective communication, public interaction, fairness and empathy are seen by officers as valuable characteristics. These qualities address issues of procedural fairness and police legitimacy that have implications for public cooperation and compliance, and ultimately for beat management. (Tyler 2004). By identifying these qualities, officers were cognizant of the importance of officers being able to provide positive interactions with the public. This dovetailed with officers' other statements regarding community interaction in the context of patrol purposes, serving those purposes, patrol goals and effective activities. It also exemplifies the service role (Wilson, 1968) sometimes adopted by officers

Having extensive beat knowledge, being observant, being a team player and being self-motivated all contribute to officers' effective and efficient beat management as both idealized officer qualities and as components surrounding the beat integrity philosophy. The beat integrity philosophy, as a management scheme, serves as a set of informal work rules and as Stroschine et al (2008) found, officers find them meaningful, effective, and driving their behavior.

### **Officer Characteristics**

While officers discussed the important qualities of being a good patrol officer, observing officers' activities and behaviors allowed me to draw some conclusions about two over-arching



characteristics of patrol officers that serve them in their work environment and also affects how they engage in patrol; a visual orientation and the demonstration of self-reliance.

**Visual orientation.** In both their techniques and the cues that triggered behavior, officers tended to focus on a visual component within their environment. While it would be expected that officers are observant and look for trouble and crime occurring as a part of their workplace expectations, it is important to stress that some officer behavior was driven by what they observed and the assessment they gave to the activity or behavior. For officers, it was not just behavior that did not seem normal, and would not seem normal to the average person, but it was also behavior that they deemed not normal within their understanding of their beat. Officers used their beat knowledge-the types of people on their beat and where they lived, the types of businesses and their activities and hours, and the kinds of community activities that normally occurred-and used this to assess the activity or behavior occurring within the context of the beat. For example, seeing an intoxicated, homeless person downtown would not be unusual, maybe even common place, for officers on that beat. However, that same type of individual seen on a beat in the southern part of town in a residential neighborhood would be quite unusual. When officers observed behavior that strayed from this normative experience, it drew their increased attention.

The sixth sense, or gut feeling, as described by officers might be described as a heightened awareness that was activated by the presence of visual cues that officers had been conditioned to recognize and pay attention to. Officers relied heavily on their own experience when managing their beat. In their experience, and in their desire to be better officers and gain more knowledge about their beat, and patrol work in general, what is referred to as the “sixth

sense” may be officers’ mental filing system of the recognition of cues that convey different meanings.

While not asked specifically of all the officers, very few officers mentioned being trained in behavioral analysis techniques; a method of observation conducted during an interview or interrogation that looks for body language and speech patterns that are indicative of deception (Vrij, Mann, Kristen, and Fisher, 2007). However, many of them identified body and speech cues as being indicative of deception. The presence of certain tattoos, attitudes, or weapons might also signal a possible risk to officer safety. Certain behaviors in a situation that seemed unusual, based on their personal and professional experience in how people were likely to react or what they expected to see on their beat, raised their awareness and suspicions.

Because of the investigatory nature of police work, officers made connections between observations and information. How scenarios and situations presented themselves gave officers an indication of how to proceed in an investigation, call for service, field contact, or traffic stop. In these situations, officers, based on past observations, had expectations of how people behave under certain circumstances; the kinds of statements they make, the way they say them, and their physical reactions to an encounter with the police in that particular context. As officers proceeded in their interaction, when they observed behavior or heard statements that appeared unusual, illogical, or were believed to be indicative of deception, a reaction, described as the sixth sense or gut instinct, may be elicited. This sixth sense suggests something is wrong which in turn prompted officers to change the focus of the interaction. Officers might be prompted to seek new or different information, take a different investigative approach, or become extra suspicious or cautious. This is the experiential thinking that Worrall (2013) discusses. Past

experiences prompt the brain to act quickly to assess a situation and make an instinctual decision utilizing abstract cues, memories, and association.

The results provide a unique officer-derived exploration of instinctual behavior. Cues, based on past observations, when observed in the present triggered the “sixth sense” reaction and prompted officers’ behaviors-either to make further connections or to more closely examine what is being presented. This process may be a mental file and retrieval system. Officers have mentally filed away these cues that based on past experiences indicate how to feel and proceed. The presence of cues subconsciously signaled a need for heightened awareness to the situation and individuals involved. Because this cue filing and retrieval system has become second nature, officers may not even be immediately aware of what particularly triggered the “sixth sense” feeling but it is triggered by a cue that the officer has already identified through experience and is now observing.

**Self-reliance.** Underlying how officers managed their beat was a quality that can be described as self-reliance. While solidarity and a sense of teamwork was evident among the officers, more important to how officers operated was the reliance they had on themselves to maintain motivation, make discretionary decisions, and develop and utilize beat knowledge, as well as maintain the larger concept of beat integrity. In response to the interview question, one frequently mentioned desirable quality of patrol officers was self-motivation. Officers relied on that self-motivation to not become complacent, to make their own calls by proactively patrolling, to make both positive community and field contacts, and to go that extra step to resolve a situation.

Officers frequently relied on their own judgment and discretion in managing their beat. Officers made decisions on how they would enforce the law and maintain order on their beat,

what areas they chose to focus on, and what activities they engaged in. During interactions with the public, officers relied on themselves to assess risk to themselves and other officers, assess the truthfulness of subjects, assess the danger to the public, determine what is fair, and determine the best course of action. Officers could not be trained in how to deal with every possible circumstance while taking into account any number of mitigating or exacerbating factors for every situation they encountered. They relied on their training and other officers' input to a certain extent, but ultimately it came down to what the officer is experiencing at the time, what the officer had experienced in the past, and what action will best accomplish the end result the *officer* wants to see from the encounter. With discretion, the officer was allowed to make the decision as to the best course of action. It was an officer's experiences that would help determine if they gave a break on a ticket to someone down on his luck, or whether they utilized a subject as a confidential informant.

When examining how their patrol perspective and approach developed the most commonly cited influence was the officers' own experience, more so than the training experience and even more so than input from other officers. Their experience came from knowing and working their beat. Officers took pride in their beat knowledge and newer officers expressed wanting to learn their beats better. That beat knowledge tied into the broader concept of beat integrity; that expectation that officers be self-reliant by knowing their beat, owning their beat, and handling their beat. In this department the degree an officer had beat integrity was noticeable to other officers and a high degree of beat integrity, with some moderation, was desired. Officers relied on their own judgment in managing their beat integrity with the process of jumping calls. Even though the department operated as a team, officers to a certain degree, were on their own, having to make decisions when there was no time to radio a more senior officer for advice or

when they found it necessary to take action before their backup arrives. Officers had an expectation that other officers were self-reliant; that officers knew what they need to know, knew what they should do, and could be trusted to do it. Officers had that expectation of themselves, knowing that is what other officers expected of them as well. Officers needed to take charge of their beats and take charge of situations and they had to have the self-confidence, knowledge, and skills in order to do so autonomously. These results provide a unique perspective on how officers assess themselves and other officers, in the context of good patrol work, and examines some core personal qualities that helps drive their behavior. This exploration of the nature of patrol officers enhances the understanding of why officers engage in certain behaviors or actions and how they perceive the work environment that influences certain officer behaviors.

### **Communication and Community**

Of the three main purposes of patrol that officers identified, (community visibility, crime prevention, and deterrence), community visibility, and the community interaction they used to serve that purpose, were tied very closely with another central theme in how officers did their work-communication. The community was the operating environment and communication was an important tool that officers used to help negotiate that environment. This is an important consideration in understanding how officers manage their area of responsibility. The community component was prominently featured as not just a purpose of patrol, but in activities that officers liked to engage in, goals they set, and in being an effective officer. Visibility and interaction with the public was important and subsequently, communication was a theme that also showed up prominently. Officers viewed communication as an important component not only in its part in community interaction but also in establishing effectiveness and efficiency in their work, and its mastery as a patrol officer quality.

## **Communication**

In regard to the community, officers recognized the importance of establishing a rapport both with members of the public in general as well as those who were looked upon as subjects or problem people. For example, when intelligence revealed that a local business may be serving as a clubhouse for a patch wearing motorcycle club, an amiable approach by an officer in making contact with the club established a positive contact and revealed the club was law enforcement-friendly. Officers believed that making these positive community contacts were important and part of what patrol officers should be doing or trying to accomplish.

Different approaches for different types of people and situations are required. Knowing how to speak to subjects being interviewed, knowing when to express empathy, or knowing when to be verbally forceful, was a skill that officers learned that allowed them to gather intelligence with a minimum of problems, deescalate situations, as well as take control of problem situations. Officers spoke to subjects in a manner the subjects were accustomed to or were comfortable with, a skill that came from understanding who they were communicating with and why, incorporating an approach described in communication literature as accommodation theory (Gallois, Ogay, and Giles, 2005).

Poor communication skills and approaches can generate, extend, or compound problematic interactions with members of the community as well as instill a negative perception of the police (Giles, Fortman, Dailey, Barker, Hajek, Anderson and Rule (2005). Bull and Milne (2004) suggest that many police officers are not formally trained in conducting interviews and their department relies on the officer's observation of more experienced officers conducting interviews. Subsequently these officers become poor interviewers. While I observed that most officers seemed to have a good communication skillset, I also observed some encounters that

suffered from poor communication for example, a relatively calm encounter between a subject and an officer turned into a violent arrest because of an overly aggressive approach by another officer arriving on the scene. Some calls for service interactions could not be resolved effectively as officers became entangled in verbal jousting with subjects, and I also observed interviews with victims and witnesses that were less than productive because officers were not engaged in active listening and failed to probe and ask follow-up questions on witnesses' verbal statements. Most officers however, were quite effective in communicating with subjects, witnesses, and "problem people", utilizing a mix of authoritative and personable tones to continue to elicit information and cooperation, and gain compliance from individuals.

### **Community**

The community was another underlying theme identified by officers. Successful and positive community interaction was tied to a certain degree to officers' communications skills and also to the public perception of, and reaction to, officers. Officers referenced a community theme in identifying purposes of patrol and the means to serve them, establishing positive community contacts as a goal, as well as some of the things that officers enjoyed about their beats. While this behavior was expected from the department, most officers did not consider what they were doing as meeting a departmental expectation. Instead, they believed they were doing what an officer should do: be visible and make contact with members of the community. It served both the public interest and officers' interests as those relationships could make their job easier in gathering intelligence and gaining compliance while providing citizens with a sense of security knowing that officers were out on the beat and cared about its residents.

Officers had a sense of being a member of the community and when they had the opportunity, many of them said they liked making positive community contacts. There was,

however, also evidence of an uneasy relationship with public. While officers realized they were serving the public by answering calls, they also felt that calls took away from the important function of patrol. Officers even more pointedly referenced the nuisance calls as obstacles to the important work of patrolling. This could result in the public that is calling for service being perceived negatively based on the nature of the call. While some officers noted that some callers saw their issue as a problem that only the police could solve, officers perceived the same problem as a nuisance or a waste of police resources. Other officers however, had an even more jaded perspective about the seriousness of the problem and the appropriateness of the use of police resources, feeling that some of those problems were brought on by the callers themselves through their own ignorance, gullibility, and carelessness. While officers typically were respectful of citizens in their interactions, officers expressed frustration to me and amongst themselves over what they saw as misuse, or ineffective use, of the police. This cynicism and negative perception of some members of the public and their desire for police services has been attributed to part of the police occupation culture both historically (Manning, 1977) and currently (Loftus, 2010) as officers

Only a few officers mentioned the public's negative perception of police officers as an obstacle to patrol, and from my observations, while negative perceptions of, and reactions to, the police existed, the general populace served by the study department did not hold a negative view of officers. Officers' encounters with local business employees were typically positive. Officers were greeted or waved at and officers were personally familiar with employees. Observation of the conversations officers had indicated they had an ongoing, friendly relationship with employees, who expressed gratitude and appreciation for what officers were doing. Residents of the neighborhoods patrolled typically had a positive or neutral reaction to officers. Officers were



able to initiate contact with residents in a few different ways. Officers had coupons for free ice cream cones they would distribute to children wearing their bike helmets as well as badge stickers and mini FPD logo temporary tattoos to distribute to other children on their beat. It gave them an opportunity to interact with children and occasionally their parents while on patrol. Some officers were able to find opportunities to stop at Kool-Aid stands, shoot baskets with teenagers at the park, or chat with neighborhood residents who were out and about.

While one might expect that encounters between criminal suspects and officers to be confrontational, I witnessed other encounters between officers and subjects during field contacts, investigation, and order maintenance encounters, where their reaction to officer presence was resistant and disrespectful and seemed to stem from what appeared to be a pre-existing attitude in the subject, and not based on an objective reaction to the officer's action.

From my observations, in general, it seemed people respected the authority of officers when they called officers to assist them with a problem or encountered officers in situations framed in a positive way, such as offering assistance, crime prevention tips, or non-confrontational field contacts. However, if they drew the attention of officers through their suspicious or disruptive actions, some of these individuals were resistant to officers' authority, questioning whether they could be told what to do by officers, and leveling charges of racism, discrimination, authoritarianism, and favoritism at officers without any obvious indication of such behavior from the officers.

Some of these reactions may stem from the individual's perception of the police. Historically, minorities and the police have had a strained relationship (Weitzer and Tuch, 2004) and regardless of race or ethnicity, individuals' attitudes about the police are based on their subjective perception of previous direct experiences, as well as vicarious accounts (Rosenbaum,

Schuck, Costello, Hawkins, and Ring, 2005). These negative perceptions of the police will prompt negative reactions to an officer's authority.

From my observations, these complaints from subjects did not appear to be driven by negative communication or behavior from officers but seemed to stem from situations where subjects took offense at being told what to do or how to behave. As noted by myself, and hinted at by officers during the interviews, some encounters with the public resembled attempts at social engineering; officers were trying to get the members of the public to understand what was appropriate behavior, why their behavior was inappropriate, disruptive, or dangerous, and make attempts to mitigate, regulate or stop the behavior. When this intruded on activities or behavior that the subject was engaged in some subjects became resentful at what they saw as an inappropriate intrusion in their lives by officers, and consequently exhibit a negative attitude toward officers. While this attitude may not be widespread in the study site, there are indications that officers must be prepared to manage their public image in reaction to citizens' negative perceptions of the officer and law enforcement in general. Members of the public can hold negative attitudes about the police, and display them, despite the absence of officer behavior or actions during an interaction that would prompt the display of the attitude (Gau and Brunson, 2010). These pre-existing attitudes can make establishing police legitimacy difficult; even vicarious negative accounts makes individuals more likely to perceive disrespect from officers in their own encounters (Warren, 2011). With perceptions of procedural justice related to perceptions of police legitimacy (Mazerolle, Antrobus, Bennett, and Tyler (2013) understanding this perspective can help inform how confrontational interactions with subjects and police develop and persist, and suggests the importance of good communication skills for officers to

both demonstrate procedural justice and manage these encounters effectively to establish police legitimacy.

### **The Problem-Focused Nature of Patrol Work**

While community visibility and interaction were viewed by officers as an important backdrop to patrol another important theme is the problem-focused nature of patrol work. This theme is central to officers managing their area of responsibility in an effective and efficient manner. Skogan (1976) in discussing effectiveness and efficiency, viewed organizational theory, in part, as resource expenditure where it yields the most benefits, as well as where need is greatest. This is reflected in the almost universal view of officers, either through their responses to interview questions, comments, or observed behavior, that being effective and efficient simply meant they focused their resources in areas, or on activities, that would be more effective at addressing a problem, that is, where they were needed most and have the most impact. For officers this entailed knowing their beat, understanding where the problem locations were and who the “problem people” were, and then focusing their time and efforts in those locations. Having this knowledge either through officer experience or through the use of the department’s technological access to intelligence was also seen as being effective and efficient. Officers focused their resources for purposes of deterrence, crime prevention, speed of response, and community visibility in problem locations. A number of officers used hunting and fishing analogies in describing this mindset, indicating that you go where the game is, or where you knew the fish were biting.

Officers were also problem-focused in traffic enforcement. While feelings on conducting traffic enforcement, and the performance standard associated with it, varied among the officers, they expressed an interest in issuing citations that made a difference, effectively stopping a

problem or preventing one from beginning. Their perceived purposes of both crime prevention and deterrence focused their traffic enforcement efforts. Officers would check for speeders around areas with children and schools, utilizing their resources for going after dangerous speeders, not drivers going a few miles over the limit. They were conscious of the areas on their beat that would benefit from a deterrent effect because of a high rate of accidents or speeders and focused their efforts there, not lying in wait to catch violators in locations that did not constitute a threat to public safety.

With the problem focused nature of their work officers were aware of and focused on the hotspots on their beat and their observations influenced their behavior and attitude about hotspots. Officers also saw evidence that certain areas, new businesses, and changes in city development will be centers for problems, drawing people to them and generating problems, or through its nature, being associated with individuals who were perceived as problem people like the homeless, alcohol abusers, or thieves. Officers' problem-focused approach likely contributed to the vast majority of officers identifying areas of emerging problems on their beat. Officers reacted quickly to these emerging problems and the sooner problems were identified, the sooner they could be addressed.

However, the problem-focused nature of how officers conducted their work might place some limitations on officers' visibility in all parts of the beat. This problem-focused nature and their views on effectiveness and efficiency, which focused their resources where they would yield the largest benefit, meant not all portions of their beat would get equal coverage. Areas of the beat with few problems would not warrant a large amount of patrol, which also conflicts to a certain degree with the patrol purpose of community visibility. This is an officer derived

perspective not well discussed in the literature as most studies of police presence in areas of their beat focused on the potential effects on crime, not on officer choice in patrolling.

Officers believed they had a good sense of where to patrol and why based on experience and other forms of intelligence. Patrolling in low problem areas would not address two of the three main purposes patrol officers identified, crime prevention and deterrence, and would be viewed as having limited effectiveness. If directed to patrol in low problem areas, the fluid, dynamic nature of patrol, officer's self-reliance on their own beat knowledge, and their enjoyment of autonomy might give officers the impression they are being micromanaged and subjected to unrealistic demands, similar to what officers felt when the Beat Ops Plan dictated where they should be, and when, despite officers' contrary views.

Officers also noted the futility of some directed patrol efforts in regard to hot-points, those specific areas with a flare-up of activity. A rash of break-ins in an area might draw more departmental resources but officers noted that rashes of break-ins could be very fluid and that by the time officers have mobilized a directed effort, the problem may have ceased or moved onto a different area, thus making it difficult to demonstrate any effectiveness of the directed patrol effort.

### **Random Patrol and Patterned Behavior**

Even though officers tried to maintain a certain degree of randomness in their patrolling their problem-focused approach and departmental expectations generated predictability because randomness was limited by a number of factors. Expectations related to the beat, area, time of day, and shift could predict where officers would be and this might be especially true in smaller departments with fewer patrol officers on shifts.

Previous studies of efficient and random routes for optimal patrol, (Rosenshine, 1970; Mitchell, 1972; Chawathe, 2003; Ruan et al, 2005; Reis et al, 2006; Kuo et al, 2012) discussed how predetermined patrol routes, ideally constructed with algorithms based on distances, crime patterns, and other factors, would produce random patrol routes that were efficient and focused on high crime areas while also providing sufficient beat coverage. It is considered that these routes would incorporate randomness, and officers in this study had a clear desire to be random in their patrol duties and movements and attempted to avoid the use of patterns while patrolling. It is likely that attempts to introduce pre-designed patrol routes, as suggested by Ruan et al and others, would be rejected by officers. Considering the value that officers place on their autonomy and their rejection of intelligence or directives that are perceived to be ill informed or constructed without their input, officers may find little value or utility in routes that purport to be highly random yet focused on high crime areas and encompassing efficient beat coverage. Without a recognition of the officers' knowledge or experience, the introduction of these routes may suggest to officers that the department thinks a computer program or administrator knows better than the officer on how to patrol. Such feelings may prompt officers to summarily reject these attempts and continue to rely on their own experience and judgement. However, as noted in the literature, (Ratcliffe and McCullagh, 2001; Paulson, 2004), as well as some officers' statement in the current study, officers' knowledge of where and how often to patrol may be imperfect.

While officers expressed a clear desire for randomness as important for officer safety and unpredictability, they also recognized that beat and shift characteristics, combined with departmental and officer expectations, removes some of the randomness in officers' patrol activities. Some of these expectations dictate that for officers to be effective and efficient, that

they engage in certain activities, at certain times, in certain areas, which is in line with officers' problem focused approach. This generated patterned behavior, that based on officer beat and shift, could be predicted. While officers retained the ability to remain random while driving in particular areas, their reason and time for being in a specific area was often not random but focused and purpose-driven.

While officers could utilize randomness in a particular patrol route, the area they would be in, or the activity they would be engaged in, would be predictable. It is important to consider this when understanding what is meant by the usage of the term "random" patrol. The definition of randomness, provided by Rosenshine (1970), where an observer will not be able to predict when a patrol car will pass any point on the beat regardless of whether they knew the arrival time of any previous appearance at this spot, is not fully met in these instances. For some officers, their appearance could be predicted, given an understanding of the characteristics of beat and shift, departmental expectations, and what officers believe to be is effective and efficient patrolling. However, trying to disrupt this patterned behavior may result in less efficient and effective patrolling as not focusing on particular enforcement priorities as they become available, for the sake of randomness, will result in missed opportunities in serving the purposes of patrol.

Officers patrolled with purpose and did not just randomly choose to engage in activities. That is why officers rarely patrolled low crime neighborhoods, why they worked traffic when traffic is heavy, and why they patrolled areas where likely targets existed or where locations had been previously targeted by offenders. A large degree of randomness in activities may not be logical or effective. Officers identify problems and seek to solve those problems by focusing their resources on them. With this understanding, officers' behavior in regard to the activities they engage in becomes predictable.

These results help establish how officers perceive effective and efficient behavior in managing their area of responsibility. It is realized through a problem-focused approach, utilizing intelligence and focused beat coverage that typically accomplishes departmental expectations and can also address and accomplish officers' purposes, preferences and goals. It is also important to recognize that this approach, which officers feel is effective and efficient, may be perceived by other observers as providing an inordinate focus on lower SES and high crime areas and disinterest in providing patrol service to all residents or areas of their beat (Sylvestre, 2010).

## **Intelligence**

### **Contrasts Between Officer and Departmental Intelligence**

The purpose of the second research question was to understand how officers used intelligence; the kinds of intelligence available, what was important and valued, when intelligence was used, and how intelligence was relayed and transferred. Literature examining officers' views of departmental intelligence revealed officers perceived it negatively. Compstat was perceived negatively because it lacked operational value (Dabney, 2010). Other departmental intelligence was also viewed as useless, and the personnel that produced the intelligence were viewed as uninformed and out of touch (Cope, 2004). The views reflected in these studies mirror the responses from officers in the current study, Officers felt that the use of intelligence was effective overall but the intelligence must have some inherent value. Within the framework of departmental and officer generated intelligence, officers in the current study expressed an overall preference for information that was up to date, actionable, and from what they considered to be a reliable source. They expressed a more positive view of officer generated intelligence over departmental intelligence which they perceived as having limited utility and of limited value, describing it as redundant, stale, and unrealistic.



Officers believed they made valid points about the limited utility and value of departmental intelligence. The crimes that officers investigate and the reports they take are reformatted into crime statistics. These departmentally generated statistics, reports, and other forms of intelligence are provided to officers, who recognize it as a repackaging of their work, and thus fail to see the utility and value of this intelligence. The production of departmental intelligence also creates a lag time in its presentation to officers. Officers recognize that this time delay makes the intelligence less useful and valuable.

Officers also said that the source of intelligence should be reliable, in that the source is knowledgeable enough about the conditions and situations on patrol to be able to provide useful intelligence. Departmental intelligence and, in particular, patrol directives were also described by officers in this study as unrealistic. Officers felt that directives did not account for higher priority patrol activities, were too time consuming, or were directives to perform activities already being done by officers. The administrative sources of these directives consequently were perceived as uninformed and therefore unreliable.

Officer intelligence was generated through the officers' own experiences and interactions with other officers, and for the most part it was perceived as useful and valuable. When they considered officer intelligence, officers believed and trusted in what they knew because they had experienced the situations that brought that knowledge. When the administration did not seek feedback or input from officers on intelligence or directive issues, it left officers with the impression that the administration believes it knew better than officers how their patrol should be conducted. When the administration was perceived in this manner, or when the administration presented officers with redundant or unrealistic intelligence or directives, officers could reject these administrative approaches as uninformed or dismiss their intelligence as having little

operational value and instead rely on their own intelligence and experience to guide their patrol efforts.

The introduction of the Intelligence Led Policing format signaled a change in how the department considered intelligence. Similar to the National Intelligence Model used in the United Kingdom (Collier, 2006), this format and its content was more in line with what officers considered good intelligence. However, officers were already voicing concerns about its presentation and updates, similar to complaints about the BOPs. The current study's results suggest that departmental intelligence may be perceived more positively if there is consistency in presentation of directives and intelligence to officers and across beats and shifts. They may also be viewed more positively if officers' input or feedback are utilized or recognized by the administration in their development and use.

### **Intelligence and Communication**

A common sentiment with the officers was that the administration, and more specifically, lieutenants and crime analysts who generated and disseminated intelligence and directives, were out of touch with patrol officers. Within the department, communication suffered at the lieutenant level. It was the level of administration that was seen as the breakdown point in communication up the chain of command as well as a source of poor communication in directives and mandates that seemed out of touch with officers. Because lieutenants were often seen as out of touch, their ability to communicate effectively with officers was hampered, either in actuality, or in the officers' perception that they do not understand what patrol officers experience. This did extend past the lieutenant level with most officers feeling the administration in general was out of step with what officers were doing already and experiencing on the streets.

The communication that officers and sergeants had, valued, and utilized in conducting their patrol work did not seem present once the communication involved the lieutenants who are at the lowest tier of the administration. While lieutenants played an integral role as the first line of administration for officers, the officers felt a large sense of separation between what they were and did and that of the lieutenants, an indication of how organizational culture can hamper intelligence dissemination (Cope, 2004) Ideally, the move to get lieutenants on the street would improve both their understanding of officers' daily activities and call volume and see how and when officers utilized intelligence, to what degree, and for what purposes. If lieutenants could have that understanding, they may be able to communicate more effectively with officers as they will have had experience in what officers were facing and the needs they have. There was evidence from the study officers that having lieutenants on the street did open lines of communication and facilitate understanding of beat conditions and call volume but it is unknown whether this effort would continue and if any of the anticipated benefits of lieutenants' increased understanding would be realized. Some officers questioned or expressed concerns that the program would start out strong but fade or that being on the street a few times was not enough to make a difference as the lieutenants would only get a glimpse into the officers' world but lived in an administrative one. The results suggest that it is important to recognize that officers, with a strong practitioner orientation, will likely need administrations to demonstrate that they are as capable as patrol officers in policing and intelligence before they may fully accept significant changes presented by administrations that affects patrol officers policing and intelligence capabilities. Alternately, a model of shared leadership where patrol officers comprise a steering committee and are influential in policy and practice development may provide for enhanced relations between the administration and patrol officers as well as providing improved perception

of officer work conditions and enhancing community oriented policing efforts (Steinheider and Wuestewald, 2008).

## **POLICY AND RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS**

The themes that developed through this study not only provided insight into how officers performed their duties but why. Officers revealed what was important to them as patrol officers, what they tried to achieve on patrol, what things could hamper their ability to conduct patrol, and their own expectations of other officers, themselves, and the department. From what officers revealed in the interviews and the analysis of the content, the themes that arose suggest actions that departments can take to hire better officers, improve the officers they have, improve community relations with the police, improve interdepartmental relations and communication, and improve the programs and policies they implement that affect officers.

### **Intelligence and Inter-Department Communication**

For example, officers were very clear in their criticism of departmental intelligence. The information given to officers was viewed non-actionable, misinformed, vague, and out of date. It becomes imperative that if departments want officers to utilize the intelligence they produce and find a value in it, they must **develop intelligence programs that recognize what officers want and find valuable**-pertinent, actionable, important, specific intelligence that is easy to access, cross reference, share, and upload to. If officers cannot utilize it effectively or find it doesn't offer them anything useful, future efforts at intelligence programs, and the gathering and sharing of intelligence may be tainted by officers' perception that the administration is out of touch with officers and that they have produced yet another program that lacks value and utility. While many officers stated they do have some use for departmental intelligence, much of their feelings surrounding the intelligence and its formats were negative. While departments are still expected to produce "numbers" intelligence as it can be used to identify trends and account for different criminal activity, departments can explore a more dynamic and focused format of intelligence;

one that provides the intelligence that officers desire and that officers can easily utilize and reference to locate and use pertinent information, for example, the Intelligence Led Policing (ILP) format presented to the study officers.

Considering the example of the Beat Ops Plan used within this department it is important to **incorporate officer input in program and policy development**. One thing that was evident during the interviews with officers was their confidence in their own knowledge and skills. Officers come to view themselves as experts in what they do; they have the training, experience, and knowledge to properly assess situations for risk, determine possible outcomes and the best course of action, and negotiate the level of attention or law enforcement to be utilized in different situations. Officers repeatedly pointed out that if the administration wanted to know what was really happening on the streets they need to talk to the officers who work them. Because of their perception as experts in the field, or at least the recognition that they can provide valuable information and a realistic viewpoint, officers believe that their feedback is valuable and important and have an expectation that the administration should be properly utilizing them in the formation of action plans, policies and intelligence.

If administrations want officer buy-in to a program that involves officer behavior they must involve those officers in some meaningful manner in the process by recognizing how officers rely on their own intelligence, and seeking their feedback and participation in the process, not just expecting blind compliance from officers, and reflect that in the program itself by demonstrating that officer input was involved and appreciated. Officers, through their own assessment of the new program, and inter-officer communication in the department, will quickly recognize when a program was formed that did not incorporate their experience and feedback and if it is found lacking in some way, it will be perceived negatively. To not incorporate the

view of experts, as officers see themselves, when developing a program, runs the risk of tainting the formation of the program, producing a sub-standard program, and lowering the perceived value or utility of the program. During the tenure of the former chief, there was a time in this department when patrol officers felt marginalized; that they were simply cogs in a wheel rather than being partners with the administration. Recognizing their street experience and intelligence in formulating policies and programs can help boost morale by demonstrating to officers that they and their input are valued, can help formulate more effective and efficient policies, and allow for better officer-administration relations.

Within the context of the chain of command, officers noted the weakest point was at the lieutenant level. Departments may find it beneficial to **improve the coordination and communication between lieutenants and officers**. While sergeants do, and should, serve as a go between, the communication of policies, procedures, and programs may be enhanced, as well as the generation and transfer of intelligence, if lieutenants develop and attend to a street focus rather than just an administrative focus. In the study department, they tried to address this deficiency by having lieutenants working shifts on the street and this might be just one of a few ways that officers and lieutenants can develop and maintain a peer relationship in contrast to being viewed as “admin” officers who are out of touch with “real cops”. Lieutenants can also attend briefings and seek input from their officers, do their own form of walking tour within their districts, and take on an active street officer approach rather than an administrative one while participating in specialized activities or operations like traffic blitzes. By “getting their hands dirty” this allows them to communicate with officers as peers, allows officers to express ideas and feelings to lieutenants outside of the direct chain of command, and can help lieutenants

revitalize the essence of being a “cop”, all of which can facilitate better overall communication, understanding, and cooperation between lieutenants and officers.

### **Officer Development**

Because of the importance that officers gave communication skills and the frequency that good communications skills were mentioned as valuable or important in various aspects of patrol work, **administrations should try to ensure that good communication skills are sought out and developed.** In the selection of candidates, possession of good communication skills should be an important qualification and mechanisms should be in place in the selection process that can identify those candidates that possess good communication skills. During the training phase, training officers should possess excellent communication skills, be able to assess the trainees’ competency in communication, and be able to offer constructive feedback that can help officers develop those skills. For current officers, sergeants and lieutenants should try to be cognizant of poor communications skills in their officers and continuing education in developing communication skills can be required for these officers, as well as being made available to all interested officers. This continuing education, in a variety of formats, could also be required of all officers to serve as refresher courses during annual training.

**These communication skills become important in establishing and maintaining positive community interaction.** Officers stressed the multiple benefits that can be reaped by officers interacting with public as if they are part of the community. Administrations need to ensure officers are exercising those communication skills by making concerted efforts to establish those positive community contacts. Officers spoke of the importance of making those contacts, establishing rapport, and letting the public see the human side of officers. Departments should encourage officers to make those positive contacts, not just field contacts, and to utilize



their communications skills to enhance the image of the department and themselves. This will help demonstrate to the public that the police are part of their community, just as officers themselves feel they are, rather than as an outside force that doesn't understand or care about the citizens they are policing. Officers who are adept at communication can incorporate the tenets of procedural justice (citizens have a voice and are heard in their interactions with the police, police decision making that is neutral and fair, and citizens being treated with dignity and respect) which will enhance the perception of police legitimacy, an important pillar in strengthening community policing in the U.S. (President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing, 2015).

### **Enhancing Patrol**

Interviews revealed that the vast majority of officers viewed patrol as an important, useful function. It allowed officers to take on both law enforcement and service roles and utilized the autonomy and discretion that comes with their roles, as well as utilizing their beat knowledge, to take the initiative on crime and community problems. This should be supported by administrations by **insuring staffing allows for patrol time within the constraints of call volume**. Officers felt the need to have time to patrol and do not consider patrolling as a kind of secondary activity while they wait for calls for service to come in. While just having officers going from call to call fulfills the department's mandate of attending to the public's calls for service it doesn't fulfil the officers' mandate of patrolling their beat. Staffing and call volume have a very real effect on officers' ability to patrol, and thus the benefit they feel it provides to the community, as well as officer satisfaction. Departments should recognize the importance officers put on patrol and how they can facilitate officers in achieving effective patrol by appropriate staffing to handle beat coverage and call volume.

Though with some potential pitfalls, **administrations can recognize the advantage of assigned beats**. As indicated by officers, having extensive beat knowledge and having a sense of beat integrity leads to better policing on the beat. Because officers have a better understanding of the problems on the beat, gained through their experience on the beat, they can be more effective at solving those problems. As more time is spent on the beat establishing community contacts officers become a familiar face which can generate more positive community contacts. The contact, trust, and rapport that officers establish assists them in becoming more effective at gathering intelligence from citizens, understanding their concerns, and serving the citizens on their beat more effectively and efficiently. But administrations also must contend with the fact that these semi -permanent beat assignments may limit officers' city-wide knowledge. There is also the possibility that officers may become complacent, bored, or dissatisfied with their assigned beat. This department's line bidding process did allow some flexibility for officers to experience a different beat. By being able to move to a different beat, officers also have more ability to pursue the patrol activities which are of greater interest to them.

Even if the ability for officers to choose their beat and shift is limited, administrations should recognize that officers will feel more satisfaction, and likely be more productive, if there is **engagement in activities officers have an interest in and opportunities are available for officers to pursue those interests**. Assigning an officer, who has little interest in traffic enforcement and would rather be hunting warrants, to work a beat where the main focus is traffic enforcement will result in a dissatisfied officer and is not an effective use of that officer's interests and skill set. While it is unlikely that all officers in a department can be assigned a beat and shift that matches with their interests, administrations should at least be cognizant that officers have different ideas on the purposes of patrol, goals and preferences in their work, and

recognize the benefits of assigning beats and shifts that match officer interest. Staffing should be maintained at a level that allows officers the time and ability to engage in other assignments or duties that might be available through the department. If officers never have the opportunity to seek out additional training for other assignments or duties, or if they are pulled from these assignments because of staffing shortages, departments miss out on the opportunity to utilize officer strengths where they can be most beneficial.

### **Implication for Future Research**

This study produced qualitative insight into how officers feel about, conduct, and want to improve patrol work which has been absent from policing scholarship to date. While the information revealed is not generalizable to all departments, it provides a look into the insight and attitudes of officers and **this type of study could be replicated in other departments**. Doing so can provide these departments with an opportunity to explore and understand the officers under its command and find ways, specific to their department, to rectify problems, address officer concerns, and utilize the knowledge that beat officers have available to them. Without an in-depth understanding of officers' feelings and attitudes, departments run the risk of missing out on opportunities to utilize patrol officers as a resource for intelligence, community relations, and effective departmental actions, as well as potentially overlooking both problems relating to morale and officer effectiveness, and the positive components that enhance officer bonding, communication, and patrol effectiveness.

For researchers, replication will build up the knowledge base of policing behavior that is derived directly from officers. Replication can also provide a basis to build a deeper understanding of patrol officer behavior by increasing the volume of relevant literature. As was evidenced in the current study, the data collection process revealed and identified unanticipated

information and themes regarding officers' views and behaviors. Because of the methodology used and depth of inquiry, it is likely that other researchers may also reveal previously unknown or under-developed aspects of policing or the police subculture. This can provide new or enhanced information and hypotheses regarding patrol officer behavior and decision making as well as possible avenues into new research.

**Specific themes and concepts revealed in this study can be the focus of future research.** Understanding the officers' perspective, their patrol methodology and understanding the inter-departmental dynamic can be informative in developing and improving public relations, fostering inter-departmental cooperation and the development of departmental policies and best practices. This study revealed a number of topics that can be a focus of future research.

Officers' perceptions of the public based on the nature of the contact could be informative in understanding the dynamic between the public and the police. Officers in this study made reference to "normal" and "problem" people as well as characterized other members of the public based on their interactions. Additional research would allow the field to expand beyond Van Maanen's classic "suspicious persons", "know nothings", and "assholes" typology (1973) and develop a deeper understanding and categorization of how police characterize and deal with different members of the public in the context of their encounters.

Another area of exploration is patrol officers' views on profiling; how they define it, its level of acceptance, the purposes it is used for, the degree officers use it, and the degree race is used as a factor. This will provide a perspective not often focused on in the literature and may assist in drawing distinctions between an investigative technique and discriminatory behavior.

The concept of beat integrity as a beat management approach had little reference in the policing literature and opportunities exist to further define and refine the concept, and explore its

existence or prevalence in other departments. In the exploration of this concept, researchers may find similar or contrasting sets of informal work rules or beat management philosophies in place and may be able to associate different philosophies or informal work rule sets with different types of officers or different types of departments.

Because officers engaged in patterned behavior yet still tried to remain random in their patrolling research could be conducted into how officers move about their beats; the areas they primarily focus on for different purposes, the time spent in an area, and the proximity of the patrolling to their calls for service. During this study I obtained data (currently not analyzed) on the turn by turn movements of the officer through the beat, the location of calls for service and self-initiated activities, as well as the time spent on calls, self-initiated activities, and patrol time. Conducting similar research efforts can highlight to what degree officers' patrol is actually random, whether their self-initiated activities are centered around their calls for service, the size of areas that officers focus their patrol on, and the frequency they are patrolled, as well as the square miles of the beat actually covered by patrol. Not only can this provide a behavioral observation of what is presumably officers' efficient and effective patrol but it can also identify areas that may be underserved, and that could possibly benefit from either crime prevention or positive community contact efforts.

Officers expressed a number of views regarding lieutenants' departmental role, competency, communication, and intelligence generation and dissemination. Lieutenants were in a unique position straddling both street officer and administration roles. Their perspective on managing this position and the obstacles they encounter could provide an important understanding in how communication and interaction between lieutenants and officers could be

improved. Their views on intelligence generation and dissemination could also highlight how this process might be improved or streamlined for both the administration and officers' benefit.

## CONCLUSION

The perspectives of patrol officers themselves are not well represented in the current literature on patrol work. This study sought to build on that limited knowledge base through a qualitative methodology, using semi-structured interviews and a participant observer approach. Results indicate that officers value patrol work, both as an important function for police work and as a means to satisfy their own goals and preferences, including their desire for positive community interaction.

While officers placed a high level of importance on patrol, as well as enjoying the act of patrolling, they also experienced frustration with obstacles that prevented them from engaging in patrol to the extent they desired, including high call volume, a lack of officers to effectively cover the beats, as well as the nature of some calls which they felt were an inappropriate use of police services. Officers strove to engage in efficient and effective patrol behavior, finding, among other aspects, that a focus on problem areas and people to be an effective use of their time. They engaged in a wide variety of techniques intended to both proactively address criminal activity as well as establish some level of deterrence, more specifically in traffic enforcement.

Adding to our understanding of how officers engage in patrol was their engagement in beat integrity, a methodology or philosophy of patrol that was seen as effective and beneficial to themselves and to other officers in understanding and managing their beat, ?” while they also functioned as a “team player” within the ranks by jumping calls for other officers.

Supporting other findings in the field concerning officers’ views on the sources of intelligence, patrol officers found limited usefulness in departmental sources while supporting officer derived sources, suggesting improvements are warranted in departmental assessment of

the intelligence they provide and in attempts to incorporate officer feedback and involvement in the process. Other research findings support the community oriented policing idea of permanent beats as this enhanced both beat knowledge of problem areas and in establishing positive community contacts. Police legitimacy concepts also found support in the importance that officers placed on communication skills to enhance rapport with the public, their belief in fairness and empathy in public contact, and their desire to establish positive community contact.

In conclusion, the current research study provided not only an increased knowledge base of officer behavior and decision making but also implications for further research and policy. Replication and additional exploration of some of the specific topics here can further enhance our knowledge based on officers' perspectives as well as provide the potential for improvements in policy regarding officer satisfaction and development. Departments can benefit as well as they have an enhanced understanding of how officers view patrol and can then build on communicating more effectively with the officers in their command.



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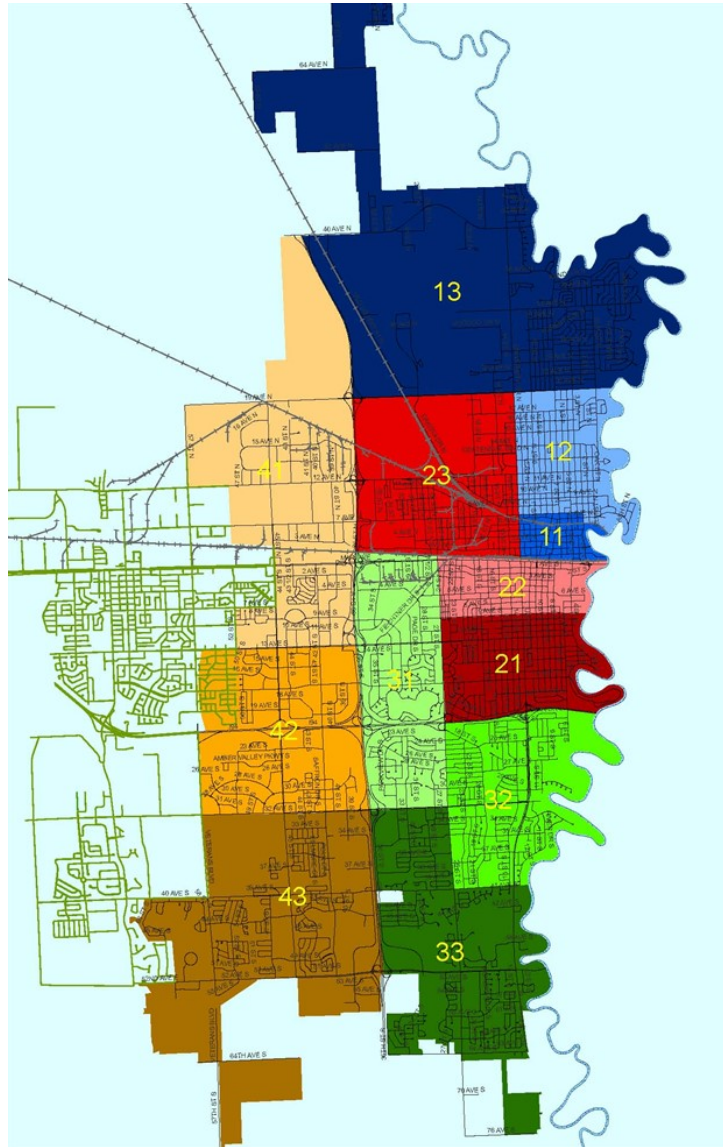
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## APPENDIX A. SUPPLEMENTARY FIGURES

Beat maps were obtained from the Fargo ND city government website, <http://fargond.gov/city-government/departments/police/police-work/patrol-work/how-fargo-is-patrolled>



*Figure A1.* Fargo police department district and beat map





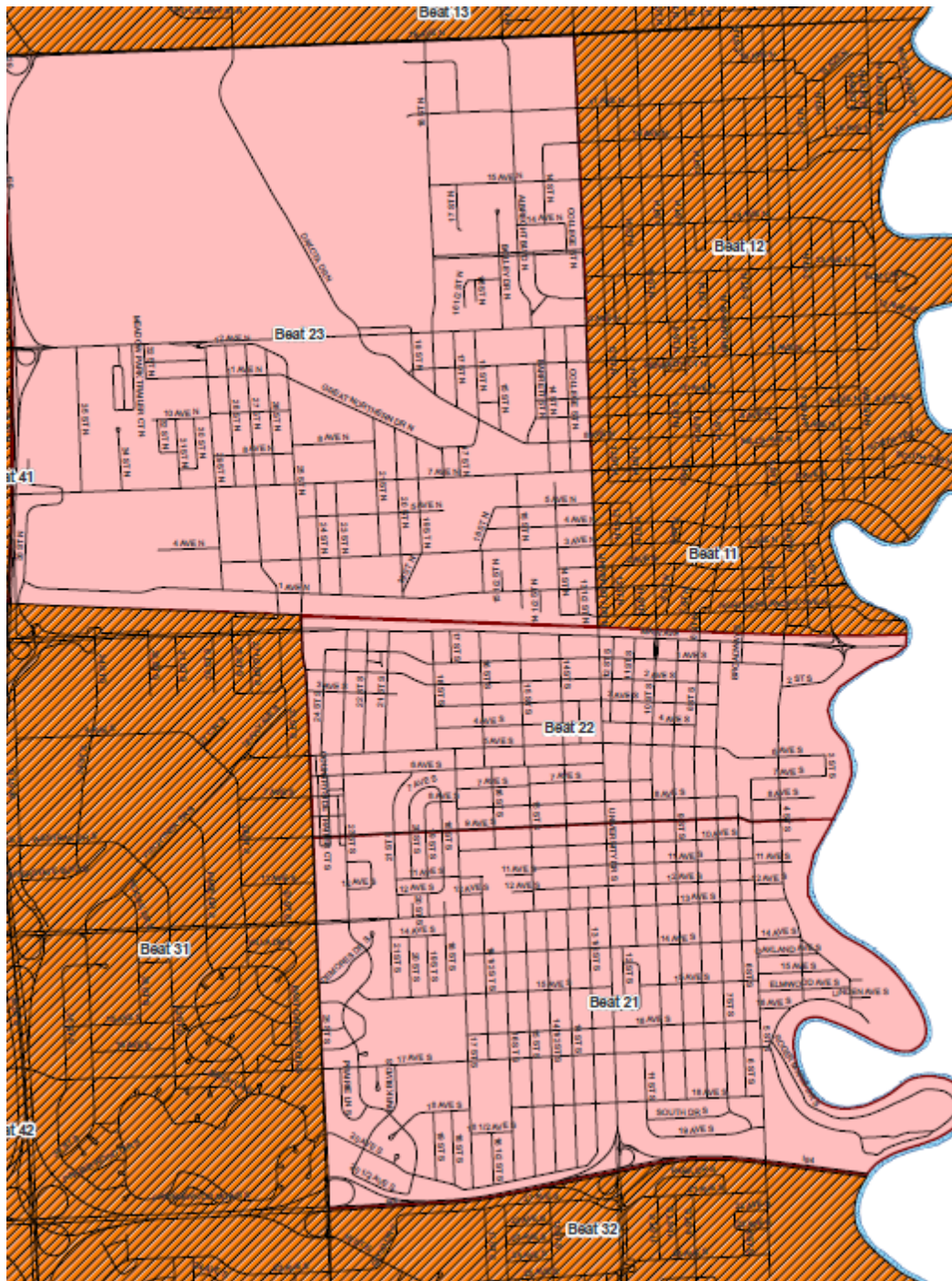


Figure A3. District 2 with beats



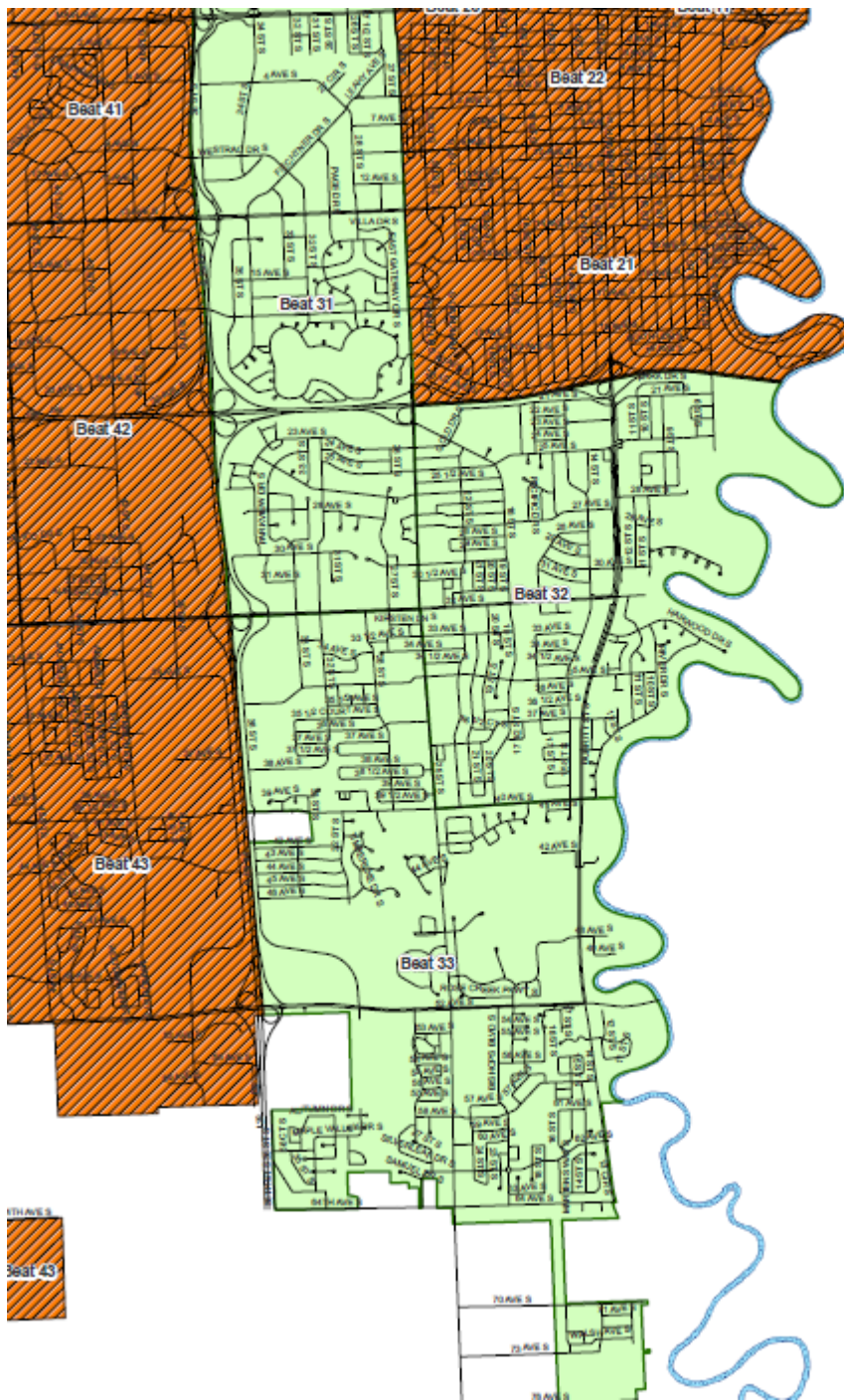


Figure A4. District 3 with beats



## APPENDIX B. INSTRUMENT

Interviews were semi-structured and utilized a series of interview questions developed by the researcher that identified officer demographic and descriptive categories, and addressed the two research questions. Research question one was addressed by interview questions 11-25, and 42 and research question two was addressed by interview questions 26-41. A copy of the interview instrument is shown below.

1. What is your age?
2. What is your gender?
3. Do you self-identify with a race or ethnicity?
4. What is your highest completed level of education?
5. How long have you been a police officer?
6. How long have you been an officer with the Fargo Police Department?
7. How long have you worked this beat?
8. How many other beats in Fargo have you worked?
9. How long have you worked this shift on this beat?
10. Which of the other shifts have you worked?
11. When you start your shift, how do you prioritize what you do first and why?
12. What do you think the purposes of patrolling are?
13. What specifically do you do on patrol that serves the purposes of patrol?
14. When you start your shift is there any particular goal you would like to see yourself accomplish by the end of the shift?
15. How do feel about patrolling (and why)?

16. With the understanding that answering calls is a given, to what degree do you feel that dispatch calls interrupt efficient and effective patrolling?  
OR  
Do feel that answering calls break up the boredom of patrol?
17. What kind of patrol pattern, methodology, tactics or techniques do you utilize when you patrol?
18. If you use a pattern, do you alternate that pattern to any regular degree?
19. When you think about your stated goals, the purposes of patrol, your view of patrol and the techniques you use, how did you derive your patrol methodology? What influenced you to patrol the way you do?
20. If you're patrolling in a particular area of your beat and you are called to a different area of your beat on a dispatch call, do you want to, or tend to, return to the area you were previously patrolling to "finish" in that area or do you start patrolling in the area that the call left you at?
21. If there is a portion of the beat not covered during your shift do you attempt to cover that portion on your next shift?
22. When considering effectiveness defined as activity that you engage in that more easily accomplishes a patrol goal or generates more results ("more bang for your buck") and with efficiency defined as activity that you engage in that saves you time, effort, and resources, what specifically do you do while on patrol that you feel is effective and what do you do specifically while on patrol that you feel is efficient?
23. Given the wide variance in dispatch call volume, to the best of your ability, what percentage of your shift time do you estimate you spend patrolling your beat compared to answering calls?
24. Do you feel that your beat would benefit from additional patrol time either with more time for you to patrol or another officer on the beat to split up the calls and patrolling? Why or why not?
25. What do you consider are the major and minor roadblocks to accomplishing patrol, what are the things that make conducting patrol more difficult?
26. To what degree do you rely on departmental derived information and intelligence, for example, Compstat, Command Central, heat maps, direct patrol mandates, provided to you in making patrol decisions?
27. How do you assess the operational value of the typical departmental derived intelligence?
28. What prompts your assessment of the operational value?

29. What is your impression of the Beat Ops Plan-What is it, what is it for, is it useful or valuable?
30. What is your impression of ILP -Does it seem to provide enough useable intelligence and do you feel it is superior to some of the other forms of available intelligence?
31. To what degree do you rely on beat/shift officer derived information and intelligence for e.g. officer generated intelligence stemming from experience, officer interactions on calls and through chat messages, and officer generated posts to the Briefing BB in making patrol decisions?
32. How do you assess the operational value of beat/shift officer intelligence?
33. Describe the typical briefing interaction with officers from the different shifts on your beat, do you try to physically have a face-to-face meeting or do you rely more on electronic communication?
34. How well do you think you know the geographical area of your beat-the boundaries, shortcuts, routes to avoid, quickest routes, and orientation of buildings and residences?
35. Are there areas, addresses or people on your beat, based on your knowledge and experience, and not the department's (i.e. hotspots are high volume calls for service areas), which you believe will be a developing problem?
36. What conditions, cues and signs signal to you that an area, location or person is suspicious or a developing problem that requires your extra attention and focus?
37. How familiar are you with where the hotspots are on your beat?
38. Do these areas of developing problems tend to cluster near hotspots or do they appear sporadically around your beat?
39. How capable do you think management (lieutenants and up) is in assessing the situation on the ground and understanding what kind of intelligence officers can utilize and will find valuable?
40. Do you believe patrol officers are in a better position to derive quality operational intelligence than the department (and why or why not?)
41. How would you describe the communication up and down the chain of command (officers to sergeants, sergeants to lieutenants, lieutenants to captains) about intelligence they have developed or concerns, problems, and situations that they have witnessed?

42. If you were to teach someone what it takes to engage in good patrol work, summarize a few main characteristics, beliefs, or behaviors of officers that would help them in engaging in good patrol work and being a good patrol officer.